

Connections

WINNER OF THE NATIONAL
PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION
COALITION'S GOLD AWARD

Bringing Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services employees closer together

February 2009
VOLUME 9, ISSUE 2



Why does former Big Red All-American quarterback Jerry Tagge want you to stay in the game? Find out later in this issue! *Photo: courtesy of Husker Sports Network*

DHHS in the News Update...

Here are a few headlines of news releases recently issued by Communications & Legislative Services about DHHS programs. You can read and subscribe to all DHHS news releases from the DHHS [Newsroom](#). You can also listen to [sound bites](#) issued with releases.

[AccessNebraska Hits Milestone: DHHS Has Processed More Than 6,400 Applications On-line](#) January 2, 2009

[Nebraska Workplaces Fare Well in Addressing Obesity and Physical Inactivity](#) January 9, 2009

[Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center at Geneva Receives National Reaccreditation](#) January 29, 2009

[Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home Unveils New "Defenders of Freedom" Art](#) January 29, 2009

Have a story idea you think DHHS should be sharing with media? Contact Communications & Legislative Services at (402) 471-9108.

make the connection . . .

DHHS Public Web site: <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov>

DHHS Employee Web site: <http://www2.dhhs.ne.gov>

DHHS System Advocate: 1-800-254-4202, (402) 471-6035 in Lincoln, or via e-mail at diana.duran@dhhs.ne.gov

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Connections can be made available in an alternative format for those with disabilities. Requests will be filled within 15 working days. Prior consent has been obtained for this publication to identify and publish photos of all individuals receiving DHHS services.

EOE/AA/ADA

About the Cover:



Former Husker **Jerry Tagge** stayed in the game back in 1971 to become an All-American Big Red quarterback, and he reminds us all today to "Stay in the Game" by getting screened for colon cancer. For more on this important story, see article on page 4 of this issue!

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Strategic National Stockpile Program

By Dianna Seiffert

Increasing a score from 66% to 85% is significant progress, and that's what the DHHS Division of Public Health did with its Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) program. For years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has rated DHHS on its work in emergency preparedness. We've received millions of dollars in CDC grant money and are expected to make progress in areas like surveillance, laboratory standards, and emergency communications.

With hard work and determination, DHHS' score for our SNS program increased dramatically.

"The Division of Public Health continues to work with other state and local agencies so Nebraska can excel in emergency preparedness and set an example for others to follow," said **Dr. Joann Schaefer**, Chief Medical Officer. "No matter what our score, I've no doubt that we can get the job done if an emergency arises."

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) is a national resource of medical supplies ready and waiting to help states handle public health emergencies. It includes pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and medical equipment. The CDC has these "stockpiles" located around the country so states can have access to the supplies they need within 12 hours of requesting them.

Before the CDC gave us our score, they came to Nebraska to personally visit and review our SNS program. They shared many positive comments about our program. One was about the rewriting of our SNS plan instead of simply updating the previous plan.

"The plan we have now includes more details about our SNS program, and we've documented our procedures better," said **Russ Wren**, Emergency



Simulated medical supplies are unloaded at a 2006 exercise.

Photo: Carl Morones

Response and SNS Coordinator. "A lot of people contributed to the plan by sharing their expertise. By re-writing and adding more details, our new SNS plan is much improved."

The SNS weighs about 50 tons, is packed in 130 specialized cargo containers and fills the space of 8 semi-trucks or a Boeing 747. If the SNS is ever requested, DHHS employees trained to help may be called to work at a moment's notice, day or night.

"Receiving, repackaging, shipping and storing the stockpile is a complex operation involving a lot of people from DHHS, other state agencies and the federal government as well," said Wren.

DHHS has recruited and trained approximately 40 people to assist with the process and is always looking for more people willing to help. If you are interested in participating, talk with your supervisor and Russ Wren at (402) 471-3438.

DHHS has provided SNS training and opportunities to practice unloading and repackaging SNS supplies.

"The more we can do to get ready ahead of time, the better prepared we're going to be when we have to bring in the SNS," said Wren.

Even though improving our score is reason to celebrate, we always have more work to do when it comes to preparing for emergencies. Wren said he appreciates all the things people do to help make the SNS program stronger.



“Stay in the Game” campaign urges men to get colon cancer screenings

By Bill Wiley

Because of Nebraska’s low rates for colon cancer screening especially for men, DHHS launched the “Stay in the Game – Get Screened for Colon Cancer” campaign last summer to encourage men to get screened.

“It’s a challenge to get men screened. This new promotional campaign is designed to get their attention through something that gets their attention—sports,” said **Dr. Joann Schaefer**, Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Division of Public Health. “This is a multi-dimensional promotion designed to create awareness in the general population and encourage men over age 50 to have regular screenings for colon cancer.”

A special emphasis is being placed on north Omaha because mortality due to colon cancer is significantly higher for African Americans. The mortality rate for African Americans in 1996-2005 was 30.8 cases per 100,000 population, including both men and women. For whites, it was 20.9 cases.

Because sports are big in Nebraska, Husker football, basketball, volleyball, baseball and softball games are all featuring messages encouraging colon cancer screening. Ads are also being placed in print, and on TV and radio.

Jerry Tagge is the campaign spokesperson. Tagge was Nebraska’s All-American quarterback in 1971, led the Huskers to national titles in 1970 and 1971, and was named Most Valuable Player in the 1971 and 1972 Orange Bowl games.

The print ads are called “staying in the game” and feature Tagge in a vintage photo running with the ball. He emphasizes that men should have screenings for colon cancer starting at age 50.

Johnny Rodgers, 1972 Heisman trophy winner, is also featured on various campaign materials.

In addition, the Nebraska Medical Association is assisting with eight men’s health forums across Nebraska to educate men about the importance of colorectal cancer screening.

Speakers at the forums include men who are colon cancer survivors or who have had pre-cancerous polyps removed because of screening.

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death (after lung cancer) in the nation. Regular colon cancer screening can make a dramatic difference; however, Nebraska unfortunately has one of the lowest screening rates in the country. Approximately 920 new diagnoses and 350 deaths of men and women occurred in Nebraska last year.

In addition to the Colon Cancer Program in the Division of Public Health, other partners include Nebraska Medical Association, American Cancer Society, Nebraska CARES (Cancer Awareness, Research, Education and Service—a coalition of over 100 associations and individuals addressing cancer), and the Husker Sports Network.

Get more information about colon cancer at www.dhhs.ne.gov/crc.



(At left) Big Red football legend Johnny Rodgers signs a “Stay in the Game” poster for Monica Seeland of the Nebraska Hospital Association. This kick-off activity was held at Memorial Stadium in Lincoln. (Below) On the same occasion, an unidentified fan gets a poster signed by former Husker All-American quarterback Jerry Tagge.

Photos: Bill Wiley



Community-Based Services oversight enhances quality of services and life for those with developmental disabilities

By Jerry Crisp

Many know that the DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities oversees the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC), but fewer are aware of the Division's Community-Based Services. Both BSDC and Community-Based Services share a common goal of enhancing the lives of those with developmental disabilities.

"Our main jobs are to provide access to services through Service Coordinators and oversight of community-based providers across the state," says **Tricia Mason**, Community-Based Administrator.

Fifteen Community-Based Services employees located in the Nebraska State Office Building in Lincoln are responsible for oversight of community-based providers, state and provider quality assurance activities and the budget for community-based services. About 200 Service Coordinators across the state help individuals with developmental disabilities and their families access services. Service Coordinators also serve as members of a client's interdisciplinary team that designs services to meet an individual's needs.

Several of these employees have been recognized for exceptional service.

For example, **Mary Eman**, Service Coordination Supervisor in the DHHS Holdrege office, was recently recognized as a DHHS Supervisor of the Year. Among her achievements were helping develop a quality review process and



Tricia Mason
Photo: Bill Wiley

a statewide training program for Service Coordinators. **Kim McFarland**, Administrative Assistant within the Division of Developmental Disabilities in Lincoln, was also honored as a DHHS Supervisor of the Year for her sensitivity, ability to connect person-to-person and exceptional communication skills.

Community-Based Services teams conduct certification reviews of all community-based programs and services in Nebraska. When visiting a provider, the team selects a random sampling of individuals served by a program and reviews records, observes training and living accommodations, and interviews the individual, staff members, the Service Coordinator, and the family or advocates. A team also

interviews administrative staff and reviews documentation of staff training, quality improvement efforts, and the work of committees responsible for protecting rights, reviewing behavioral incidents and safety measures.

Following a certification review, the team conducts an exit interview and writes a report citing strengths and recommended improvements of the community-based program. If necessary, the provider submits a plan of correction to address citations on both an individual and systems level.

In addition to these necessary components, certification reviews can also create common bonds.

"A team recently conducted a certification review received a note from **Kathy Weidner**, Area Director of Mid-Nebraska Individual Services in Broken Bow," says Mason. "The note told reviewers **Bev Mayfield** and **Joan Speicher-Simpson** that Weidner's program appreciated their high level of professionalism and thanked them for technical support they provided both during and after the review. That's the kind of relationship all review teams strive for with the community-based programs they visit."

According to **John Wyvill**, Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities, "Individuals with developmental disabilities in Nebraska are fortunate to have so many dedicated DHHS employees working so tirelessly on their behalf."

"Our main jobs are to provide access to services through Service Coordinators and oversight of community-based providers across the state," says **Tricia Mason**, Community-Based Administrator.

Health inspections can be welcome learning opportunities

By Jerry Crisp

Philip “Skip” Quady, Environmental Health Scientist within the Division of Public Health for 36 years, is an inspector that food managers can be glad to see. In an article published in the Norfolk Daily News (“Inspector: Public School’s Kitchens ‘Cleanest Restaurant in Town,” October 27, 2008), **Lanette Stoffel**, nutrition director at Norfolk Middle School and Norfolk High School, said, “The man knows his stuff. He’s very, very good.”

Stoffel says that Quady is very thorough.

“Everything is inspected—food storage, the temperatures, cleanliness, the freezers, food and personal hygiene from dress attire to shoes, gloves, fingernails, jewelry and making sure aprons are clean,” she says.

Making sure that food is kept at appropriate temperatures is important because the Middle School and Norfolk High Food Service Workers prepare lunches transported each day to schools in the district’s lunch program. Food temperatures must be recorded several times daily.

“Sloppy Joes,” for example, need to be thawed properly and temperatures taken as the dish cooks. Temperatures are taken again when the meat is panned and put into a transport box.

Transport boxes are kept plugged in until placed into trucks delivering the food to other schools. As soon as the food arrives, the temperature is taken again, and then recorded once again halfway through serving.

During inspections, Quady visits each school and records the temperatures of the food as well. He spends up to a couple of hours in each kitchen, in addition to his visits to each of the other schools at serving times.

Quady inspects 126 facilities in 14 northeast Nebraska counties in the school lunch program twice each year. He also works with child care centers, swimming pools and spas, mobile home parks, home wells and septic systems and other areas.

Quady says his supervisors and other inspectors across the state have always considered inspections as educational opportunities more than fault-finding missions—a principle he has always tried to practice.

“The inspection process that I and other inspectors use offers an educational opportunity because not only can code violations and their corrections be explained, but new information and techniques can be shared to help avoid future violations,” Quady says.



“Skip” Quady hits the road again to inspect school kitchens, swimming pools, spas, and well and septic systems across northeast Nebraska

Photo: Connie Hughes

“After all, food managers and their staff are the on-site, everyday food inspectors,” according to Quady. “Getting people on your side in a common effort to ensure health safety means that everyone is pulling in the same direction.”

Another way Quady helps educate people whose work he inspects is to refer them to **Troy Huffman**, an Environmental Health Scientist in Lincoln. Huffman sends two or three e-mails each week to keep more than 500 food service professionals across the state updated about food recalls, disease outbreaks and other safety topics.

“If anyone wants to receive this information, they can contact me at troy.huffman@nebraska.gov, and I’ll be happy to add their e-mail address to my mailing list,” says Huffman.

“Cooperation with the inspection program has been very good,” Quady says, “and facilities know they can contact us if they have questions or problems.”

Whether Philip Quady is conducting an inspection, helping people problem-solve or referring them to good sources of information, people he works with can welcome him as a partner in a common cause — the health and well-being of those they both serve.

Combo public health conference breaks new ground

By Marla Augustine

Sometimes it seems like there are too many good conferences but not enough time.

The Division of Public Health and other public health entities are changing that by deciding to hold one really good, really big conference a year as a way to bring the right people together all at once.

The first-of-its-kind conference will be held April 8-9 at the Cornhusker Marriott in Lincoln. Over 400 people are expected to attend.

The participants will include public and allied health professionals, social workers, environmental health specialists, dietitians, nurses, physicians, health educators, advocates and others interested in the well-being of Nebraskans.

“What will be really great is getting together with colleagues and sharing ideas and achievements,” said **Dr. Joann Schaefer**, Director of the Division of Public Health.

Key speakers will include:

Dr. Georges Benjamin, president of the American Public Health Association, on building a healthy America;



Dr. Ross Brownson, co-director of the Prevention Research Center, on evidence-based public health practices and evaluation;

Mario Drummonds, CEO of Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership, Inc., on repositioning maternal and child health in America; and

Nancy Lee, president of Social Marketing Services, Inc., on social marketing and public health issues.

Other topics include: health disparities, mindless eating, public health emergency law, food safety, Web 2.0, school health partnerships, underage drinking, the College of Public Health, suicide prevention and the nursing shortage, among others.

Conference sponsors are DHHS, the Center for Biopreparedness Education, the Public Health Association of Nebraska, the Nebraska Minority Public Health Association, the UNMC College of Public Health and Creighton University.

Continuing education credits are available for physicians and nurses. Application for approval of credits has been made for health education specialists and dietitians.

For information about registration or continuing education credits, go to http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/Public_Health/conference/.

Call for Employee/Manager-Supervisor of the Year nominations



THE CLOCK IS TICKING!



DHHS Employee/Supervisor of the Year forms have been sent to you on-line, or you can pick them up from your Human Resources office.

Nominations must be returned no later than March 25th!

DHHS employees are the core of our business. Recognizing them gives due credit and harnesses the power of motivation!



Long-Term Care Ombudsman Office an advocate for those who need one

By Jerry Crisp

*Winter, spring, summer or fall,
All you got to do is call.
And I'll be there, yeah, yeah, yeah.
You got a friend.*

James Taylor

When people receiving long-term care services in nursing homes or assisted living facilities need a friend, the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office is there.

The Ombudsman's Office works to enhance residents' care and quality of life by emphasizing empowerment, problem-solving and conflict resolution. The Ombudsman also delivers a federal program designed to prevent health care fraud and empower residents to protect themselves from financial fraud, errors and abuse.

"My job is to advocate for or on behalf of long-term care residents," says **Patty Pierson**, the State Long-Term

Care Ombudsman within the DHHS Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care. "Eight regional and local ombudsmen located in offices across Nebraska are there whenever someone receiving long-term care needs them."

The regional ombudsman is a DHHS employee working in Scottsbluff and operating out of the Aging Office of western Nebraska. Local ombudsmen are housed in and employed through the Area Agency on Aging offices, located in Hastings, Kearney, Norfolk, Beatrice, Lincoln and Omaha. Pierson provides guidance and technical support to them.

"When someone enters a long-term care facility, they are given a list of residential rights and an ombudsman's phone number, and the Ombudsman Program encourages individuals to resolve their issues with facility staff," Pierson explains. "They know that if they can get a concern resolved by working with facility staff, they can do

that, and if not, we're here for them."

In FY 2007-08, Ombudsmen provided 4,039 consultations to residents or family members and 2,252 consultations to facility staff. In that same time period, 1,023 new cases were opened, and 969 cases were closed.

To meet this demand, Patty Pierson and the regional and local Ombudsmen rely on senior citizen volunteers. In FY 2007-08, 99 volunteers donated 8,420 hours in long-term care facilities.

Among these volunteers is **Colene Hance**, who spent more than 179 volunteer hours last year working directly with seniors to help them live healthier, happier lives. To honor her efforts, **Tami Barrett**, Local Ombudsman in the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging, nominated Hance for the annual "Starlight Award" given by Humana, a national health and prescription drug plan provider.

Hance was chosen from among 20 other nominations statewide, and Humana awarded a \$10,000 grant on her behalf to the Lincoln Area on Aging.

When Omaha Mayor **Mike Fahey** conferred the Starlight Award in November 2008, he described Hance and the other nominees as "compassionate, caring individuals who provide a helping hand to those in need and look for opportunities to brighten the lives of others."

"With volunteers like these working alongside, the Ombudsman Office strives to be there when residents of nursing homes and assisted care facilities need a friend," Pierson says. "We try to be the kind of friend we would want to be there if we found ourselves in the same situation."



(l-r) Local Ombudsman **Tami Barrett**, Starlight Award Honoree **Colene Hance**, and **June Peterson**, Executive Director of the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging

Photo courtesy of Windcrest Assisted Living

Front Liners

By Jerry Crisp

Teaching is a hard profession to get away from, as **Nancy Seward** can tell you. After having taught for several years, she tried her hand at the restaurant business, then accounting, and then back to teaching. She has been a resource teacher at the Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center at Geneva (YRTC-Geneva) for seven years.

“When you help a student who has struggled with a subject and was ready to give up and then finally succeed,” she says, “then you know why teaching gets into your blood.”

Many students Seward works with have experienced little academic success, and some have even lost faith in their ability to learn.

“My biggest challenge lies in giving kids hope and motivation and getting them to believe in themselves again,” she says. “They often seem so lost and don’t think they need to develop skills in reading, writing or math.”

Seward tackles that challenge by setting modest but achievable goals.

“I only ask them to try for a C grade at first,” she says. “After that, we can shoot for higher goals.”

In addition to teaching duties, a typical day for Seward involves working with any students in study hall who need extra help, getting assignments for students out of class due to illness or behavioral problems, and assisting students through a Web-based program for those who need to complete a course they started in a previous school.

The biggest reward for Seward comes “when something seems to click.”

“I love to see the excitement, the sparkle in their eyes, when students first sense progress and then experience real success,” Seward says. “Seeing them go from ‘I don’t care’ to ‘I can do it’ is like getting a hole in one or hitting a home run.”

Seward recalls one girl in particular who started with very low reading skills and struggled to graduate from high school.

“I met with her two or three times a day to help her achieve her goal,” explains Seward. “To watch her put on that cap and gown was the first reward. She had so much self-confidence and hard-earned pride that I don’t think her feet even touched the ground.”

Another reward followed.

There are thousands of stories to be told about DHHS employees who deliver direct customer services that *help people live better lives*. This is only one of them.



Nancy Seward instructs a class at the Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center at Geneva, where she strives to make a difference in the lives of every student

Photo: Delores Hartman

“Her mother attended the graduation ceremony and cried tears of joy,” Seward reports. “She told me her daughter never would have graduated if she hadn’t come to YRTC-Geneva.” Teachers like Nancy Seward find their love of learning proves contagious when shared with others. Teachers like Nancy Seward demonstrate the profound influence even one person can have on the lives of others by opening the door to a better life and a brighter future for their students.

Teachers like Nancy Seward also remind us of the influence of those in our own experience who expand horizons and bring something just beyond reach within our grasp.

2009 Legislative Update



The 2009 Legislature, which convened on January 7, is now in full swing. The 90-day session is slated to end on June 1. Hearings on bills will be held through March 20.

This year, Senators introduced 679 bills. Of these, 170 were thoroughly reviewed by program staff and are being monitored by the DHHS Legislative Team because they could impact DHHS programs or services if passed.

Nine bills were introduced on behalf of DHHS, and another two dealing with DHHS programs were introduced on behalf of the Governor. DHHS supports these 11 bills.

The nine bills introduced on behalf of DHHS are:

- LB 38 (Senator Mike Flood)** Change assault provisions on DHHS employees.
- LB 91 (Senator Gwen Howard)** Provide for a subsidized adoption of a child who was under a subsidized guardianship prior thereto.
- LB 122 (Senator Colby Coash)** Change terminology for child protection cases.
- LB 150 (Senator Lavon Heidemann)** Repeal the Prostitution Intervention and Treatment Act.
- LB 199 (Senator Arnie Stuthman)** Change provisions relating to child support enforcement.
- LB 288 (HHS Committee)** Change provisions relating to health and human services--DHHS Cleanup bill.
- LB 290 (Senator Stuthman)** Require fingerprints and criminal history record information checks of individuals who transport vulnerable adults and vulnerable children.
- LB 341 (Senator Tanya Cook)** Change provisions relating to tuberculosis and prevention.
- LB 345 (Senator Tim Gay)** Change juvenile court jurisdiction involving truancy.

The two bills introduced on behalf of the Governor are:

- LB 319 (Senator Flood)** Change provisions relating to child care reimbursement.
- LB 346 (Senators Gay, Howard)** Provide intent language for children's behavioral health services.

Employees can track the outcome of these bills on the Legislature's Web site at www.nebraskalegislature.gov/ or the DHHS Legislative Bill Tracking application in the Lotus Notes Yellow Pages. If you have questions, contact **Bryson Bartels**, the DHHS Legislative Coordinator at (402) 471-0541 or at bryson.bartels@nebraska.gov. All requests for information about legislative bills from non-employees should be referred to Bryson.

Wellness Words: Think HEALTH



Most of us know that we should have an annual check-up but do we actually do it? There is no excuse for not having a thorough yearly exam.

Routine tests that you should have include blood pressure, weight, cholesterol and usually blood work to rule out diabetes or thyroid problems.

Men should have prostate exams. Women should have mammograms and PAP smears.

Quit procrastinating!

Dr. Joann Schaefer
Chief Medical Officer

Tested for radon?

While smoking remains the number one cause of lung cancer, radon exposure is the leading cause for non-smokers. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year are radon-related.

"While only a small percentage of Nebraska homes have been tested for radon, one out of two homes have elevated radon levels," says radon program manager **Sara Morgan**. "Low cost radon test kits are available to test your home."

To purchase a short term test kit for \$5, send a check or money order with your name and shipping address to the Nebraska Radon Program, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE 68509.

To learn more about the dangers of radon, contact the Nebraska Radon Program at 1-800-334-9491 or visit <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/radon/>.

March Observances

March 2009						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Problem Gambling Month

Gambling is a fun diversion for most people, but each year over 41,000 people in Nebraska experience serious problems from gambling.

Signs of problem gambling include:

- Gambling until you've lost your last dollar
- Losing sleep due to thinking about gambling
- Gambling for longer than you planned to originally, and
- Making repeated attempts to stop gambling.

Some stressful life events can increase the odds of people developing gambling problems, such as the death of a loved one or a divorce; an early big gambling win; pre-existing health problems such as depression; or a family history of addictions.

To learn more or to find help, call the Gamblers Assistance Program helpline toll free at 1-800-522-4700, or go to <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/beh/gam/gam.htm>.

Mental Retardation Awareness Month

In Nebraska, most individuals with developmental disabilities receive services and/or other supports in their home communities. Approximately 4,800 individuals receive funding from DHHS to support their community services. DHHS also operates the Beatrice State Developmental Center, a 24-hour facility serving approximately 189 persons.

Mental retardation and related developmental disabilities begin before age 22 and significantly affect both intellectual functioning and behavior. Mental retardation can be caused by several factors including genetic conditions, or problems during pregnancy, labor or birth, and health problems such as diseases, malnutrition or exposure to poisons.

While people with mental retardation will learn and develop more slowly, they can and do learn.

Learn more about DHHS programs and services at www.dhhs.ne.gov/dip/ded/dedindex.htm.



Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Respect Works!

Respectful behavior, at both the individual and organizational levels, plays a role in creating and maintaining safe and healthy communities and workplaces.

What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence includes rape, sexual harassment, and incest. Making offensive jokes and comments implying threats of harm, posting offensive images, grabbing or fondling someone, and stalking are some other examples of sexual violence.

How does respect prevent sexual violence?

Respect means treating people with consideration. This includes respecting their boundaries. Being aware of how we treat one another makes us less likely to hurt or offend someone.

What can we do?

- Treat other people with respect.
- Express your concern when you hear an offensive joke or comment.
- Offer to help when someone is in need.
- Reinforce positive behavior.
- Advocate for policies in your community designed to prevent and respond to sexual violence.

To learn more, go to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center Website at www.nsvrc.org or the Violence Against Women Network (VAWnet) at www.vawnet.org.

In their own words

Letters to DHHS employees who are *helping people live better lives*

Dear **Rita Thalken** (Information Systems Analyst, Public Health, Licensure Unit, Lincoln):

WOW! I think this may well be the FASTEST, BEST customer/client service I have ever experienced! You and your team are awesome!

I e-mailed my request for fee waiver (active military service) at 10:04 a.m., and you e-mailed me back at 10:18 a.m., saying I was good to go! AWESOME!

Michael A. Meeker,
Major, U.S. Air Force, Medical Corps
Family Medicine Physician

Dear **Bill Gibson** (Norfolk Regional Center administrator):

Since our inception as the long-term secure Region Six Recovery Center, we have been working closely with the staff at Norfolk Regional Center (NRC) to assess, admit and consult with regarding residents from their program. Throughout this process, the NRC staff has been invaluable to our success.

In particular, **Chris Boe-Simmons** (Clinical Program Director), **Elaine Halferty** (Certified Master Social Worker Supervisor), and **Michael Gettman** (Certified Master Social Worker) have gone out of their way to assist us in this process. We came to rely heavily on them when we got to NRC, and afterwards when we have additional questions, they are always responsive.

I appreciate the opportunity to work with such dedicated professionals.

Patrick Crouch, PhD
Program Administrator
Telecare Region Six Recovery Center
Omaha

Dear **Carol Bennett** (Social Service Worker, DHHS Grand Island office):

I just wanted to say thank you for your recent attempt to help us with the Energy Assistance Program. Though we didn't qualify, you referred us to other resources that were able to help.

Over the years (since my husband first become disabled), I've had contact with numerous caseworkers, many of whom were very helpful, but I don't ever remember having contact with any as helpful and caring as you when we needed help. Thank you for your kind, compassionate and respectful treatment.

A grateful Grand Island customer

While *Connections* receives more letters from satisfied customers than we can ever publish, please send letters via any method listed in our editorial box on page 2, and we'll publish as many as space allows.

Seeing Red



If the Nebraska State Capitol looks red or pink in this photo, it's because red lights were turned on for National Wear Red Day on February 6. The red color represents support for women's heart disease awareness. The crimson hue lasted through three days, symbolizing that one woman in every three will die from heart disease.

The DHHS Office of Women's Health, Every Woman Matters, and the Nebraska Cardiovascular Health Program are expanding efforts to get word out about women and heart disease. In partnership with the American Heart Association, a lunch and learn event was held, and the State Capitol building was turned bright red.

Throughout February and with the help of the Olson Center for Women's Health, libraries statewide featured heart health displays and enrolled women in the "Go Red" movement. A display wall featuring heart health risk factors and action steps was seen by about 3,500 employees and members of the public in the State Office Building in Lincoln.

Table tents were displayed in main dining halls and employee break rooms in both the State Capitol and State Office Building. The program also partnered to record weekly radio segments in February. *Photo: Bill Wiley*

Happenings!

Photos spotlighting DHHS activities around the state

ON A SHOOT: A production team videotapes at the Beatrice State Developmental Center's Beauty Shop as part of an overview of the campus for an employee recruiting production. The video aims to encourage potential direct care providers to consider a career at the facility by offering a more accurate picture of both unique challenges and rewards.

Here, **Mike Wight**, Public Information Officer within Communications & Legislative Services, mentors **Travis Bossard**, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln intern, on the finer points of getting a good shot. In the background, Cosmetologist Supervisor **LuAnn Faris** puts finishing touches on a new do for a BSDC client, as Developmental Technician **Nicki Spilker** looks on approvingly. *Photo: Jerry Crisp*



STAY IN THE GAME! That's what 1972 Heisman trophy winner **Johnny Rodgers** urged people attending a special event in the Nebraska State Office Building in Lincoln on January 27 to do. "Stay in the Game" is the theme of a DHHS campaign that encourages men age 50 and over to get screened for colon cancer.

Following up on the campaign kickoff described in the article on page 4 of this publication, Rodgers showed footage of some of his famous football plays to demonstrate how teamwork is essential to success, whether in sports or in life. Rodgers urged family members to encourage each other to get screenings for colon cancer. *Photo: Bill Wiley*



If you have a photo of a DHHS activity you'd like to share with co-workers across the state, contact *Connections* by any means listed in the editorial box on page 2, and we'll publish as many as space allows.