In May, 2015, the ACHD Community Health Needs Assessment revealed a notably high incidence of unintentional pediatric injuries. A data drill-down identified that traumatic head injuries were related to the non-use of bicycle helmets. In Audrain County, only about 11% of children wear bicycle helmets as compared to contiguous counties that have helmet-wearing rates as high as 92%. Our goal is to reduce our injury rate.

Several months ago, I precepted a Moberly Area Community College nursing student who was required to complete a capstone project before graduation. Together, we developed a bicycle helmet safety PowerPoint program and educational print materials.

Then, Chris Newbrough, our Grant Coordinator, and I applied for and received two grants for our new bicycle helmet program. I trained ACHD staff to do proper helmet fittings following National Highway Traffic Safety Administration guidelines.

From March through May of this year, the ACHD provided bicycle helmet safety education in every Audrain County Elementary school, for grades ranging from Kindergarten through Grade 3. We performed helmet fittings and provided a complimentary bike helmet to each child who had a signed Parental Pledge form, with parents committing to reinforcing the need to wear a bicycle helmet when their child rides a bike.

The new program was an overwhelming success, with schools asking us to return next year (we visited each school before classes ended in May). The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services recently approved my proposal to make this new program one of our new Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) program goals for our new contract year with them. This support means the ACHD can continue to connect with parents, children, teachers, and others and work together to make Audrain County a safer place for our kids to ride their bikes and enjoy their summer. Many thanks to every ACHD staff member who volunteered to fit kids with helmets, present the program, and reinforce Rules of the Road Bike Safety and Hand Signals education.
Hi! My name is Katie Swaim and I am from Martinsburg, MO. I graduated from University of Missouri Sinclair School of Nursing in May of 2008. I started my nursing career in Pediatrics at University of Missouri Women’s and Children’s Hospital. In October of 2012, after starting a family of my own, I made a career change and started working at the Audrain County Health Department in Home Health and Hospice.

When the health department’s Home Health and Hospice ended in October of 2014, I was given the opportunity to become one of the public health nurses. My role at the health department is as the Communicable Disease Program Lead. I am responsible for investigating communicable diseases, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), tuberculosis, animal bites, and following elevated lead levels. I also provide child care health consultation to Audrain County early childhood education centers.

My husband, Josh, and I are high school sweet hearts and were married August 1st, 2009. We live outside of Martinsburg in his grandparent’s former home and have done several renovations over the years, making it our own. Josh works at True Manufacturing here in Mexico, MO. We have two wonderful children. Haydon will be 5 in July and start kindergarten in August this year and Hannah will be 2 this July. Haydon and Hannah definitely keep me busy and keep my heart full!

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STI & HIV Middle & High School Education

In June of last year, I met with Deborah Hill-Haag at her request regarding the need for effective sex education in Audrain County middle and high schools. I developed a board-approved curriculum that meets Missouri Statutes for sexually transmitted infections (STI) and HIV/AIDS.

Today, Sandra Hewlett, MS, APRN and Katie Swaim, RN, from the Audrain County Health Department provide the STI and HIV/AIDS lectures at the following schools each year:

♦ Mexico Middle School
♦ Community R-6
♦ Mexico High School

Audrain County has STI rates that significantly exceed State or U.S. rates with conditions or diseases, such as adolescent pregnancy, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

Since the inception of this program, STI testing has increased & more individuals are being treated to prevent the spread of disease. Our goal is to see incidence rates for all STIs decrease in Audrain County by the time of our next Community Health Needs Assessment. We sincerely thank and appreciate Deb Hill-Haag for her leadership and collaborative spirit in partnering with us to help make Audrain County a healthier community.

We welcome all middle and high schools to contact us to provide this important educational curriculum. For more information, please contact Sandra Hewlett at 573-581-1332.

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MEET KATIE SWAIM, RN, BSN, CPN - COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROGRAM LEAD
Along with your sunscreen and sun hats this summer, you also need to begin thinking about getting your children’s immunizations for school.

Children attending kindergarten through the 12th grade are required to have the following immunizations or boosters:

- DTaP — Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis; or DT — diphtheria and tetanus
- Tdap — Pertussis (8th, 9th, or 10th grade)
- Menactra (8th and 12th grade)
- IPV — Polio
- Hepatitis B
- MMR — Measles, mumps, rubella
- Varicella — Chickenpox

For those children 18 and below with no insurance, or who are American Indian/Alaskan Native, the vaccine is given at a minimal cost. For those children who do have insurance, ACHD has contracts with over 30 insurance companies.

A person under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, or be accompanied by another adult and have written permission from the parent or legal guardian. Please call us with any questions to get your child immunized before school starts at 573-581-1332.

The Audrain County Health Department’s (ACHD) Elementary & Middle School Education Program focuses on health topics, such as nutrition, dental hygiene, poison prevention, smoking, and hand washing. The Nutrition presentation focuses on serving sizes, the different types if fat, and foods/beverages that are high in fat and sugar. Dental hygiene focuses on educating children about cleaning their teeth, emphasizing the importance of brushing and flossing.

Poison prevention focuses on what poison is, the different forms of poisons, identifying various poisons, and learning to stay safe from poisons at home and school. Tobacco and smoking focuses on the dangers of smoking and the different diseases smoking can cause. The hand washing program focuses on when and how to correctly wash your hands and remove germs.

Health education helps motivate students to maintain and improve their health and prevent diseases. ACHD enjoys presenting health topics to students of any age. If you’re interested in any of our programs, or for a list of additional programs, please call Jodi or Sandra at the Audrain County Health Department at (573) 581-1332.
Animal bites from mammals, such as dogs, are reportable and investigated to monitor the risk of rabies. Approximately 4.5 million dog bites occur each year in the United States, children being the most common victims.

There are many ways to decrease one's risk and prevent dog bites. Teaching children to be careful around dogs is very important. Children should be supervised when around dogs and caution should be taken with dogs that you are unfamiliar with. A dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies should not be disturbed, and it is not safe to panic, make loud noises, or run from a dog.

Permission should always be obtained from the owner prior to petting their dog gently. In addition to causing injury, dog bites can spread diseases, such as rabies.

Rabies is one of the most serious diseases people can get from dog bites. Rabies is a virus that affects the brain and is almost always fatal. The virus is spread through the bite and saliva of an infected dog.

There are steps to take to keep rabies under control and decrease your risk, in addition to bite prevention, such as:

1. Ensuring your animals are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations;
2. Keeping pets under control, and avoid allowing them to run loose;
3. Avoid contact with stray pets and wild animals
4. Report wild animals exhibiting unusual behavior or stray pets to animal control officials.

If you have any questions about dog bites and rabies, please feel free to contact Katie at the Audrain County Health Department at: (573) 581-1332.
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) is a nutritional program that not only provides nutritional foods, but nutrition education to help families establish healthful eating habits at a young age. The nutrition education provided focuses on the benefits and importance of breastfeeding and prenatal nutrition for the pregnant mom.

For families with a new baby, we focus on establishing a good breastfeeding relationship to help encourage success of exclusive breastfeeding to at least a year. If the mom is experiencing struggles with breastfeeding, we address these and provide follow up support to help her meet her breastfeeding goal. Post-partum nutrition is also discussed to help moms with healing from delivery and with being the healthy eating role model for her child(ren).

Six months later, we provide education on introducing foods, continuing to breastfeed, and the challenges that can arise with the addition of new foods and new ways of feeding.

For families with toddlers and preschoolers, we teach the My Plate program and then spend a lot of time discussing strategies to help increase foods that a child may be lacking in, whether that be new ways to try offering vegetables or strategies to decrease juice intake, and increase water.

The nutrition education that we offer is a favorite part of the WIC program because we are helping families to establish healthy habits that will affect the health of our next generation.

Through the MCH program, Audrain County Health Department (ACHD) offers a parenting class taught by Andrea Swartz, ACHD Peer Counselor. Andrea presents America’s most practical and entertaining parent training that helps people become a Love and Logic Parent. The program includes steps to responsibility, solutions, consequences, and choices.

A nutrition component has been added to the Love and Logic parenting class taught by Greta Hopke, RD, LD. This includes secrets of feeding a healthy family, tips for label reading and handy healthy snacks. These classes are offered by ACHD at least two times a year. The classes are designed to encourage healthier parental relationships and healthier bodies and minds. This program addresses the needs of pregnant women, mothers, infants, children and adolescents in order to protect, promote, and improve their health.

The Love & Logic program is free of charge for parents, teachers, and caregivers. The program also meets training hours for Missouri foster parenting and meets one time a year to meet clock-hour guidelines for day care providers. Love & Logic is held on a Friday evening and Saturday morning at the ACHD at 1130 S. Elmwood Drive, Mexico Missouri, 2–3 times per year. Pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Kerry Patton, LPN at the ACHD: (573) 581-1332.
Congratulations to the following staff for professional development accomplishments:

- Chris Schroeder, BS, CPA, was recently hired as our new Accounting & Human Resources Manager.
- Sarah Palmer has begun her first classes in the Environmental Health program at Columbia College.
- Sara Palmer was also recently promoted to the role of Environmental Public Health Specialist I.
- Larry Teson has returned to a P/T role as an Environmental Public Health Specialist.
- Diane Baker and Sandra Hewlett have added 31 additional commercial insurance contracts, making it possible for almost all Audrain County residents to access care here.
- Sandra Hewlett has provided an educational presentation to all 115 Missouri counties on how to request and structure commercial payer contracts at each county agency.
- Sandra Hewlett established 3 Group Purchasing Organization (GPO) contracts for ACHD & other MO counties.
- Andrea Swartz has now assumed the role of ACHD’s Love & Logic facilitator.
- We’re also very proud of Faye Fairchild, our Board of Health Chairperson, for beginning her doctoral studies at the University of Missouri in June.