

Pike County Health Department

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HomeCare



Across Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 20, 2015

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Local Health Department Fiscal Crisis

Anita Andress, RN, BSN, Administrator for Pike County Health Department (PCHD) is urgently asking for public support and public assistance as PCHD is struggling to maintain public health services under the current State of Illinois budget impasse. Residents are urged to contact their Legislators and Governor Bruce Rauner to ask them to support either Senate Bill 2178 or House Bill 4311. These bills help pay for public health services that benefit everyone in the state of Illinois by **appropriating funds for the Local Health Protection Grants (LHPG) for Local Health Departments**. The LHPG funds pay for basic public health services that are essential for protecting public health and safety. Essential public health services provided by local health departments-- like restaurant inspections, regulation of private water and sewage systems, investigation of disease outbreaks and immunization against communicable diseases -- are in jeopardy because of the budget impasse.

Pike County Health Department (PCHD) is used to operating on a shoestring budget. We receive less than 10% of our \$2 million budget from local tax dollars. All other funding is from grants, contracts, and fees, with almost 40% from state grants. PCHD has been reducing hours of operation, reducing staff, reducing programming, and diligently cutting expenses for more than 5 years. In 2010, PCHD closed to the public on Friday's due to delays in state payments. Mandatory Friday furlough days were implemented for non-essential PH staff, including those in WIC, Family Planning and Family Case Management. Essential services, such as those provided through the LHPG (Food, Water, Sewage and Communicable Diseases) and Home Health were staffed on Fridays. Since that time, our office has remained closed on Fridays. Furlough days have been increased or decreased according to fiscal needs and program demands.

Since July of 2015, as a result of the current state budget crisis, PCHD has increased furlough days and now additional furlough days will be required beginning immediately for Administration, Environment Health, and Communicable Disease. All part-time public health staff will have hours reduced. We are operating our day to day operations with a skeleton crew and from paycheck to paycheck. As revenue generating programs, our Home Health and Dental Clinic keep our doors open in a good year, but are not keeping up with the lack of state funding.

Without the LHPG and other state funds, it will be necessary to make additional cutbacks in services and personnel, including layoffs. In fact, we are considering shutting down some Public Health services by the end of the year. These services are provided by highly trained and licensed
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professionals. When we have to lay-off these nurses, dieticians, and restaurant inspectors, we may not get them back.

The lack of a state budget is eroding our ability to provide services that are vital to the public's health and mandated by state law. The local public health system is losing its capacity to protect the public and respond adequately to public health emergencies like the cases of measles in northern Illinois, outbreaks of mumps downstate, and the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in our neighboring county, Adams County. Public health services benefit every citizen in every district. Assuring the conditions in which people can be healthy, like public safety and public education, is a fundamental government responsibility. Please, urge your legislators and the Governor to enact one of these bills and protect the public's health. Our agency desperately needs the public to understand and assist the Pike County Health Department and the health departments across Illinois to restore Public Health Services.

For more information, please contact Anita Andress, RN, BSN, Administrator, Pike County Health Department 217-285-4407 x 126

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