

Kawanza Newson, Editor

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Deadline for Next Issue:

**June 1, 2010**

Send materials to Kawanza Newson at  
knewso@milwaukee.gov



## A WELCOME CHALLENGE: DCEH BRINGS ON FOUR NEW INSPECTORS

by Julie Hults



The Division of Disease Control and Environmental Health (DCEH) implemented a new training model this winter, thanks to the hiring of four Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) in December who will perform food, fire and weights and measures inspections.

The new training program includes field training, but adds classroom time to cover codes and ordinances, provide customer service training, and allow for group discussions. The new EHSs were also introduced to other city departments that DCEH works with most closely, including the Department of Neighborhood Services and the Department of City Development Permit Center. They also met staff and managers in the WIC, Lead, and Immunization programs to get an overview of the MHD's public health roles beyond the food program.

There is also a lot of hands-on learning through selective "field trips" such as visiting new restaurant and tavern sites for pre-inspections and equipment reviews as well as making visits to places such as commercial kitchen equipment suppliers.

"The training regimen, combined with our time spent in the field, has exposed us to the variety of tasks that EHSs are involved in: public health, community relations, ordinance enforcement, and problem solving," said participant **Charlie Lauters**. "I am excited to start on my own knowing that the dedicated staff of the MHD is there to support me."

In anticipation of the unusual challenge of training four new inspectors at one time, DCEH knew changes needed to be made to the old training program where a new Environmental Health Specialist would have one Environmental Health Specialist II as a primary trainer. The old training consisted of the review of printed materials and field training.

The new training curriculum gives the new inspectors a chance to take information from text book knowledge to the application of it, said veteran EHS **Julie Tranetzki**. "I know these individuals are going to be food safety smart and confident in their jobs," she said.

One of the new EHSs is **John Tranetzki**, a familiar face. On the next page, we introduce the other three EHSs and share their reflections on the new training model.

*"I know these individuals are going to be food safety smart and confident in their jobs."*

— Julie Tranetzki

COMMISSIONER'S  
COMMENTS



Bevan K. Baker, FACHE

Next month, Milwaukee will join communities throughout the country in celebrating our nation's public health achievements and highlighting ways to better improve residents' health through the annual National Public Health Week observance.

Public health workers serve to protect and improve the health of their communities through prevention. And it is through their work that the nation has seen the elimination of many communicable diseases through vaccination, increases in life expectancy, safer and healthier foods, fluoridation of drinking water and safer workplaces, just to name a few things.

This year's theme, "A Healthier America: One Community at a Time" is very exciting because it gives us the opportunity to recommit ourselves to strengthening our public health infrastructure, which includes the people and resources we depend on to make and keep us healthy.

I am proud to say that the City of Milwaukee Health Department provides great services to our community. Our public health professionals continuously protect our food and water, and protect our infants, children and their families through countless departmental programs.

But it doesn't all stop with us.

From keeping current on vaccinations and being screened for lead poisoning, to having to fresh foods in our schools and workplaces, and addressing social issues that contribute to unequal care; there is a role for everyone to play.

I encourage you all to do what you can to make healthier choices and support public health in our community and in your own lives.

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE  
Commissioner of Health

NEW INSPECTORS, CONT.

KARL CURDA



Karl has spent the past 18 years managing environmental and safety programs for several employers in southeast Wisconsin in the food, chemical and heavy manufacturing industries. He has both a Bachelors and Masters Degree from UWM. "I believe the training approach taken for new inspectors by the MHD ensures that a complete indoctrination has taken

place and that it provides the proper tools for the new hires to be successful."

CHARLIE LAUTERS

Charlie Lauters came to the city from Oliver Wyman Actuarial Consulting where he worked as a consultant for health care providers, insurance companies, and state governments to help them analyze their medical claim data in order to assess, manage, and project health care costs and utilization.

"The training regimen, combined with our time spent in the field, has exposed us to the variety of tasks that EHSs are involved in: public health, community relations, ordinance enforcement, and problem solving."



STEPHANIE ZIEBARTH



Prior to her hire, Stephanie worked for a community and business development organization in Milwaukee that promotes the local businesses of the Silver City neighborhood located near the Miller Park Stadium. She also worked for a women's social service agency doing outreach to schools and gave presentations on healthy relationships and the prevention of dating

violence. Stephanie studied biology and Spanish at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and then completed her Master's of Science in Public Health at the Berlin School of Public Health in Berlin, Germany. "The new training model is very helpful because we learn about relevant topics in a "classroom-style" format while at the same time applying these to practical experiences doing inspections."

# Employee Highlight

TERRI BIRT



## Just for Fun

Find the 34 spring-related words listed below. Answers will be published in the next issue.

C L O U D S R S U N I  
 T R T S I M E T O E N  
 H N O G G E W P Y D S  
 U K E C B L O A W R E  
 N S Q S U L L T O A C  
 D P U E T S F R N G T  
 E R I E T A T I S B O  
 R I N D E E T C G R N  
 S N O L R T A K N E E  
 T G X L F H D S I E E  
 O P O I L G P D T Z R  
 R E P D Y I O A L E G  
 M E U O T L L Y E F R  
 I P D F H Y E Y M O A  
 N E D F A A M E B G S  
 I R L A W D Q I P A S  
 A C E D B U N N I E S  
 R E H T A E W M R A W

- |           |                  |
|-----------|------------------|
| BREEZE    | LILY             |
| BUNNIES   | MELTING SNOW     |
| BUTTERFLY | MIST             |
| CLOUD     | NEST             |
| CROCUS    | PUDDLE           |
| DAFFODIL  | RAIN             |
| DAYLIGHT  | SMELLS           |
| EASTER    | ROBIN            |
| EGG       | SAP              |
| EQUINOX   | SPRING PEEPER    |
| FLOWER    | SUN              |
| FOG       | SEED             |
| GARDEN    | ST PATRICK'S DAY |
| GRASS     | TADPOLE          |
| GREEN     | THAW             |
| INSECT    | THUNDERSTORM     |
| LEAF      | WARM WEATHER     |

Maintaining order is a key priority for Terri Birt. From the meticulously neat desk in her SSHC office to the home file cabinet that houses bills in order of due date, Terri always makes sure that no details or deadlines are missed. As the Health Project Coordinator for Empowering Families of Milwaukee (EFM), Terri assigns referrals to staff, keeps track of client status through SPHERE and the EFM ACCESS database, and supervises 10 MHD Public Health Nurses and one MHD Public Health Social Worker. She is also responsible for making sure that EFM has the most current information and tools to provide services to families and ensuring adequate training of staff and community partners. Terri took time out of her busy schedule to tell us more about herself.

*What's your favorite thing to do outside of work?*

I love movies so I go at least 3 times a month.

*If you were assigned to a desert island for a year and could take one song and one kind of snack, what would you take?*

The song "The Battle is not Yours" sung by Yolanda Adams and some Jay's Kettle Cooked chips

*What is the weirdest thing that you keep or have kept in your desk drawer?*

I have an Allen Wrench in my drawer because whenever you need one you can't find it.

*When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?*

A Funeral Director

*Of all the cars you've owned so far, what has been your favorite?*

Mercedes Benz C Class (it's my husband's but I drive it every chance I get)

*What has been your most memorable vacation?*

My 2002 trip to Maui with my husband where we went to the top of a volcano.

If there is a person you would like to see featured in the Employee Highlight, please contact:

**Kawanza Newson**  
**knewso@milwaukee.gov** or call **x3548**.

## 1 YOUTH, 1 DREAM, 2MORROW'S LEADER



The City of Milwaukee Health Department will once again participate in Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work® Day on Thursday, April 22, 2010. This year's theme is "1 Youth, 1 Dream, 2Morrow's Leader."

If you have any work projects that you can save for April 22nd and have the children do (ex: stuffing folders, addressing envelopes) please contact Julie Hults at

[jhults@milwaukee.gov](mailto:jhults@milwaukee.gov) or  
286-5746

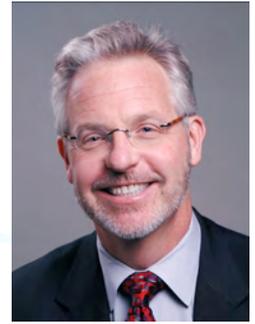
The children really enjoy  
these activities!



*Sitting at the Mayor's desk!*

## MHD H1N1 RESPONSE FOCUSES ON TARGETED COMMUNITY VACCINATION EFFORTS

*By Paul Biedrzycki*



In January, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services released data that showed a significant racial disparity in hospitalizations and infections associated with Spring and Fall waves of the H1N1 influenza pandemic.

Statewide, African Americans were three times more likely than non-Hispanic whites to be hospitalized from H1N1 infection and Hispanics and American Indians were twice as likely. In addition to severe morbidity, mortality rates among minority populations have been 2-fold higher among African Americans and Hispanics, and 6-fold higher among American Indians\Alaskan Natives as compared to non-Hispanic whites.

This data is not totally surprising as it reinforces already well-known health inequities within urban settings like Milwaukee. Other cities in the U.S. have documented similar trends. This data is thought to reflect the many factors that may lead to increased risk of infection, death or hospitalization in minority populations overall including, but not limited to, lack of access to healthcare, lack of insurance, existence of underlying medical conditions and others.

Health inequity remains a serious public health concern within our community. Many of us in the MHD are committed to reducing health inequities and are actively collaborating with many partners to address underlying health conditions that plague Milwaukee residents such as heart disease, diabetes and other life-threatening conditions.

This past February we launched an aggressive campaign to close the racial dis-

parity gap. Commissioner Baker, Dr. Geof Swain and I convened a community newspaper roundtable with key African American and Hispanic print media representatives to better understand how to more effectively reach minority populations. As a result, we've augmented our existing print media campaign utilizing the Commissioner to promote H1N1 vaccine in community papers through the end of March.

We've also partnered with AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, the United Community Center and the Black Health Coalition to provide educational awareness about the H1N1 vaccine and flu prevention as well as coordinate vaccination efforts in targeted zip codes.

We are continuing to offer vaccine at walk-in clinics and have partnered with area employers to hold clinics at workplaces around the city. We've held clinics in conjunction with MPS, the Salvation Army, the Milwaukee Housing Authority and at other non-profits and will continue to coordinate with local universities and private healthcare with vaccine distribution to the public.

I strongly encourage staff to continue to promote vaccine availability to anyone who has not yet received it. Residents can be vaccinated at any one of our satellite health centers without appointment.

H1N1 remains a priority for local public health agencies to ensure that disease transmission is mitigated within our community and especially in light of the sobering statistics on racial disparity.

## THE SEQUOIA & THE HATCHET

by George D. Browne, II



Hi! This is George, one of your IT staff. We are so excited about some upcoming changes; we just had to give you a heads-up! As you are undoubtedly aware, the IT section was restructured and reduced staff-wise. Nonetheless, as the adage goes, “a small axe can cut down a big tree.” Personally, I would add that the axe needs to be quite sharp to pull off that feat. Similarly, for a streamlined IT section to perform the phenomenal task of providing optimal services to the MHD’s employees, we have had to regroup, rethink our strategy, refine our skills, and retool.

Many of you may be familiar with Track-It, our PC auditing software. Well, we are going to use this tool to make it easier for us to respond to your needs, increase efficiency, improve our response, increase visibility, and improve accountability by keeping you more informed. Best of all, the new process will give you more control over how you monitor the status of helpdesk requests.

The MHD helpdesk is virtualizing. You will go to the helpdesk’s website and use a very simple interface to tell

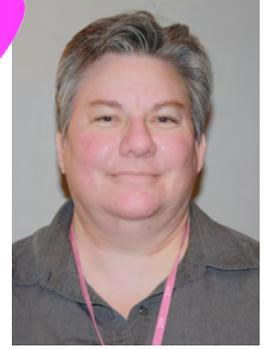
## MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL PINK ZONE EVENT

by Lisa Phillips

The Marquette University women’s basketball team hosted the fifth annual Pink Out on Feb. 20, 2010 to increase breast cancer awareness in the community. Fans were encouraged to wear pink to the game, buy official pink t-shirts, make cash donations for each three-point shot made by Marquette, or purchase rubber ducks to throw out on the court at half-time.

All proceeds from the T-shirt sales will benefit our Milwaukee Breast and Cervical Cancer Awareness Program (MBC-CAP), while the rest of the funds will be sent to the Kay Yow/WBCA Cancer Fund. In 2009, Marquette donated \$4,000 to MBCCAP. These funds were used to maintain the mammogram equipment at Southside Health Center.

Pink Out is part of a larger initiative by the Women’s Basketball Coaches Association called the Pink Zone that began in 2007. The association raised over \$1.3 million through the campaign in 2009.



Marquette University began their Pink Out event five years ago when their basketball staff contacted Mildred Leigh-Gold, former MBCCAP program manager, to learn how to donate to the program.

I’ve had the pleasure of participating in this event for the past three years. Each year I’m taken down to the court during a designated time out and introduced to the fans along with the program. It is truly amazing to stand in the middle of the court and see all the pink that the fans are wearing to bring awareness about breast cancer to the forefront.

I hope each of you will be able to attend the game next February. Tickets are cheap and it is a great family activity.

about your IT-related problems. The new system will generate and route a new work order request to the appropriate staff automatically. Additionally, both you and the technician assigned will receive an email indicating, among other things, the expected date on which your issues should be resolved. While the technician works on resolving the issues listed in your work order, you will be able to view the work order status online. This view will inform you of steps the technician has taken and serve as a progress report. When the work order is completed, you will receive an email indicating same.

For those of you who like to troubleshoot and attempt to resolve your IT problems yourselves, we will introduce a self-help knowledge base on the helpdesk’s website. You will use this interface to find proven solutions to common IT problems.

We are very enthusiastic about these changes and look forward to working with everyone using this new system by summer. We can serve you effectively and efficiently, and we anticipate the excitement of working with each of you in the coming weeks. As an inspirational speaker once said, “Even pigs fly – during tornadoes.”



## SAFE SLEEP: MHD LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN, HOSTS SUMMIT TO ADDRESS INFANT MORTALITY IN MILWAUKEE

by Anna Benton



Nearly 50 safe sleep advocates and media representatives sat motionless while listening to the Morgan Freeman-like voice reiterate the story of an infant who died while sleeping in the bed with her parents. Several gasped and shook their heads while viewing the life-size image of an adult bed that showed a tombstone headboard that read “For too many babies last year, this was their final resting place.”

The posters and radio announcements are part of a comprehensive effort by the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) to raise awareness and encourage safe sleep throughout the community. While we realize that approximately half of the deaths among babies each year results from prematurity-related complications, we also know that the number of infants who die after being placed in an unsafe sleep environment continues to be a major concern for our city.

Recent data shows that the total number of infants who died in Milwaukee increased from 111 in 2007 to 120 in 2008. As a result, Milwaukee’s infant mortality rate increased from 9.8 per 1,000 live births in 2007 to 10.7 in 2008. And though there were fewer sleep-related deaths in 2008, an average of 23 Milwaukee infants each year have died while sleeping unsafely for the past decade.

MHD launched its provocative city-wide safe sleep campaign in December at our Southside Health Center to further reduce the number of infants who die after sleeping in an unsafe sleep environment. We are also pleased that the campaign has renewed conversations on Milwaukee’s challenging infant mortality rate.

This spring, MHD will hold a Safe Sleep Summit for community stakeholders, including health care workers, schools and child care centers, businesses, and faith-based organizations. Our goal is



to create a unified community message regarding safe sleep. More details on this endeavor will be provided later.

The Health Department became an official Cribs for Kids® site in 2009. That year, we were able to provide 376 cribs to those who needed a safe sleep environment for their kids. It is our hope to broaden our reach through this program and to form partnerships with HMOs, hospital systems, and/or individuals to continue to spread our message that the safest place for babies is on their back, in their own crib or Pack ‘n Play.

*\* Save the Date \**

City of Milwaukee Health Department

**SAFE SLEEP SUMMIT**

Monday  
May 3, 2010  
7:30 am – Noon

Wheaton Franciscan – St Joseph  
Klieger Auditorium  
5000 W Chambers St  
Milwaukee, WI 53210

Too many infants are dying while sleeping in unsafe situations. Milwaukee must come together to address this critical public health emergency.

Please join Mayor Tom Barrett, Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker, and national SIDS expert Dr. Fern Hauck at this special summit on Safe Sleep.

*Think Health. Act Now!*  
CITY OF MILWAUKEE  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
[www.milwaukee.gov/health](http://www.milwaukee.gov/health)

To register or for more information, click on the following link: <http://www.milwaukee.gov/SafeSleepSummit.htm>

*E-invitation for the May Safe Sleep Summit*

# THE *Healthy* TIMES KUDOS



*From Nancy Castro:*

Kudos to the following WIC staff on their scholastic achievements:

**Pamela Jones**, and Marcia Triggs, WIC Dietetic Technicians (DTR), on completing their Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services Management from Cardinal Stritch University!

**Cassandra Sova**, WIC Dietetic Technician (DTR) on passing her registration exam for the status of Registered Dietitian (RD)!

Congratulations to all. Well done!

*From Julie Driscoll:*

KUDOS to **Darcy Dubois** - EFM Public Health Social Worker and **Katy Murphy** - EFM Public Health Nurse who did the interview highlighting the MHD Safe Sleep Campaign with WUWM.

*From Mary Jo Gerlach:*

KUDOS to **Mary Walker**, PHN in NFP. Her client called and said that she was "Awesome and wonderful," "always helping me with what I need," and "gives her all toward her job." Congratulations, Mary in making a difference in

this young woman's life and the lives of your clients!

*From Eric Gass:*

Kudos to **Courtenay Kessler**, **Samantha Perry**, and **Raisa Koltun** for their help in creating the 2010 MAPP Policy Recommendations Report.

*From Jeff Hussinger:*

Kudos to **George Browne** and **Luanne Schimmel** for an outstanding job of deploying dozens of new computers, laptops, monitors and printers to users in January and February.

## THE MHD LABORATORY LOOKS BACK IN 2009: A TRADITION OF STAFF EXCELLENCE CONTINUED

*by Sanjib Bhattacharyya, PhD and Steve Gradus, PhD*



Last year was a remarkable year for the Laboratory, which literally performed five years' worth of work in just five months' time during the H1N1 pandemic influenza outbreak. In all, the lab tested more than 6,000 specimens. Of those, 25% were confirmed positive for 2009 Influenza A/H1N1 (*Fig. 1*). Kudos to laboratory leadership and staff, and a special thanks to staff in the Virology Section for their outstanding and dedicated public health response during a

crisis of this magnitude, when at the onset of the pandemic, there were uncertainties as to disease severity and transmissibility (*Fig. 2*).

Responding to disease outbreaks and public health emergencies is no new challenge to our public health laboratory. The laboratory often plays a significant role in rapidly and accurately detecting emerging diseases, foodborne outbreaks and bio-threat agents. Our innovative operational strategies proved to be highly efficient during the 2009 influenza pandemic, when there was need of daily test result reporting to DCEH staff to facilitate our pandemic response and case follow-up.

In addition, partnerships with the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene and the Midwest Respiratory Virus Program,

innovations in staffing, scheduling, specimen transport, data handling, office support, real-time molecular testing and result reporting to local, state, national and international agencies made this challenging task possible.

The lab staff has worked through a variety of major and unique surge challenges in recent years (*E. coli* foodborne outbreaks, measles, mumps, pertussis, shigellosis), and has contributed significantly to epi-investigations. But pandemic flu presented a whole new set of challenges, broader and deeper than most. We knew the potential of pandemic flu but could not second-guess the direction, size and scope of the outbreak. Challenges that were met included validation of a new CDC assay, split shift

*continued on next page*

staffing, specimen transport issues, multiple electronic result reporting systems to a variety of partners, and introducing studies for community herd antibody and nucleotide sequence-based antiviral

resistance analysis. The lab expertly maintained its regular day-to-day operations throughout this time. With assistance from the MHD management and state and federal agencies, our labora-

tory staff provided the kind of readiness and efficiency that only a local public health reference laboratory could do – continuing a standard of excellence it has maintained since opening in 1874.

Figure 1

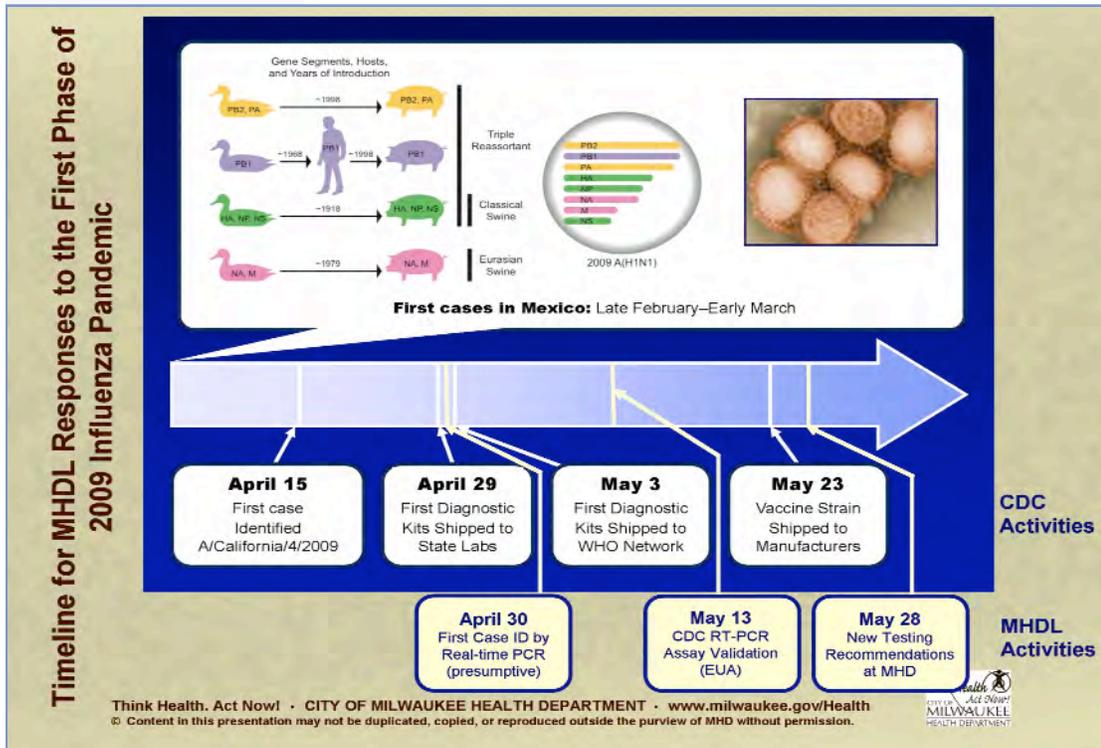
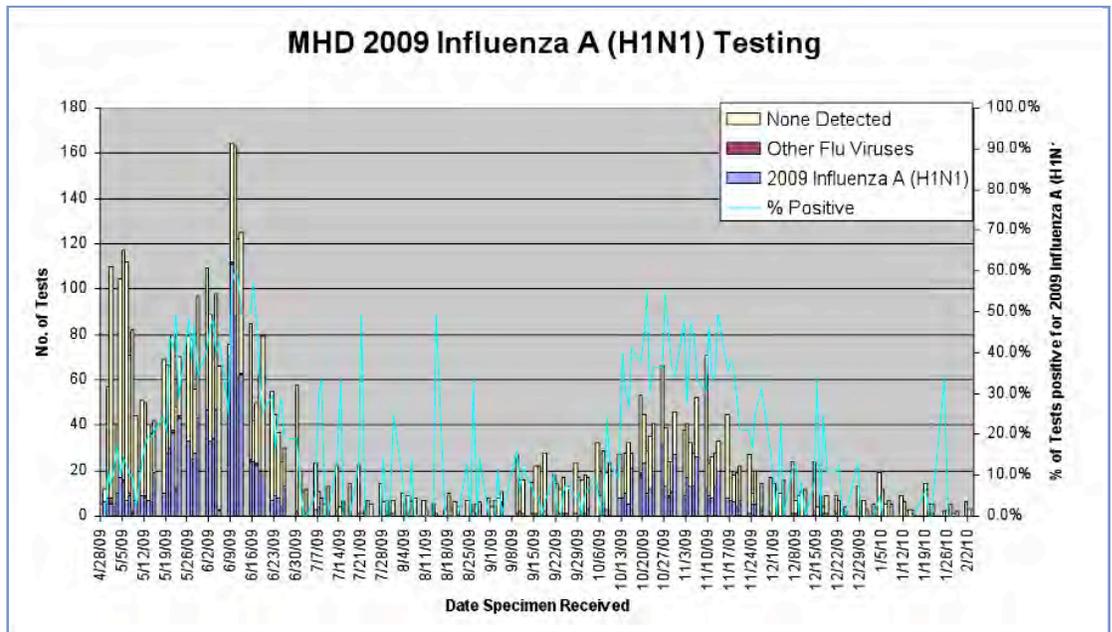


Figure 2

**RETIREMENTS**

Thank you to all who have devoted their careers to educating, empowering and improving the health of Milwaukee's citizens. Your many years of service are deeply appreciated.

Phyllis Duckhorn	Office Assistant II
Shaira Hanif	Tobacco Control Program
Gordon Hoffman	Environmental Health Specialist II
Marilyn Kirtley	Program Assistant I
Jill Paradowski	Health Care Outreach Coordinator
Robert Schweitzer	Employee Assistance Coordinator
Laura Turzanski	Clinic Assistant
Paul Zemke	Environmental Health Supervisor

**NEW STAFF/REINSTATEMENTS/APPOINTMENTS**

Gwendolyn Altheimer	Medical Assistance Outreach Manager
Karl Curda	Environmental Health Specialist I
Charlie Lauters	Environmental Health Specialist I
Phyllis Tessner	Senior Human Resources Analyst
Stephanie Ziebarth	Environmental Health Specialist I

**PROMOTIONS**

Lisa Acheson	Home Environmental Health Manager
Kristine Alaniz	Healthy Homes Inspector
Christina Brandt	Health Access Assistant
Nia Hardison	Health Access Assistant
Debra Husar	Health Access Assistant
John Sromek	Microbiologist
Eric Yanke	Lead Project Coordinator

**RESIGNATIONS**

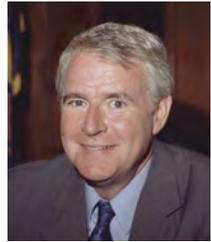
We also bid farewell to the following staff members and wish them well in their new endeavors:

Maureen Bezold	Health Project Coord. Emergency Preparedness
Nikeyah Johnson	Public Health Social Worker
Sharifah Qureshi	Public Health Nurse
Yahaira Rodriguez	Office Assistant II
Dawn Wilson	Public Health Nurse

*Just for Fun*  
*Answers*

S	T	F	D	N	A	L	R	A	G	C
H	N	R	L	E	D	I	E	R	D	A
O	E	O	R	N	A	M	E	N	T	O
V	L	S	W	R	K	C	S	L	N	C
E	I	T	A	B	W	N	E	R	G	O
L	S	T	E	R	A	S	V	I	N	O
V	S	L	E	O	N	L	O	B	I	K
E	L	A	R	I	Z	A	L	B	L	I
S	T	N	T	O	A	M	G	O	O	E
H	S	Y	D	N	A	C	M	N	R	S
C	L	O	C	H	A	N	U	K	A	H
S	E	N	S	H	M	A	G	M	C	S
N	I	G	H	T	E	O	T	E	M	A
E	G	F	R	A	C	S	S	N	L	S
T	H	R	E	D	I	C	T	S	A	O
T	A	N	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S
I	V	Y	H	H	P	L	O	D	U	R
M	N	C	P	A	G	E	A	N	T	T

- |           |          |          |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| angel     | frost    | rudolph  |
| bells     | garland  | santa    |
| candy     | gloves   | scarf    |
| caroling  | ivy      | shovel   |
| chanukah  | kwanzaa  | silent   |
| christmas | mittens  | sleigh   |
| chestnut  | night    | snowball |
| cider     | ornament | star     |
| cookies   | pageant  | tinsel   |
| dreidel   | presents | tree     |
| elves     | ribbon   | wreath   |



Mayor Tom Barrett

*Think Health*  *Act Now!*  
CITY OF MILWAUKEE HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
Tom Barrett, Mayor  
Bevan K. Baker, Commissioner of Health  
[www.milwaukee.gov/health](http://www.milwaukee.gov/health)

The City of Milwaukee Health Department in its capacity as an employer and service provider does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, religion, color, gender, national origin, arrest or conviction record, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, political belief or affiliation, or military participation. Persons needing disability assistance information, language assistance, or interpreter services please call 414-286-3524 or (TTY) 414-286-2025. Discrimination claims may be filed with the Department's Equal Opportunity Coordinator by calling 414-286-2359.

Deadline for Next Issue: **June 1, 2010**  
Send materials to Kwanza Newson at [knewso@milwaukee.gov](mailto:knewso@milwaukee.gov)