

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) supported the Advanced Practice Centers (APC) from 1999 to 2012. The APC has been a credible source for free public health preparedness products that can be easily implemented by any local health department (LHD), as the products were created *by* LHDs *for* LHDs. Today, there is a legacy of more than 100 APC Products that build capacity, saving health departments time, resources and money by providing proven solutions and world class ideas that are ready for implementation.

## CASE STUDY

**The Southwest Center for Advanced Public Health Practice** based in Tarrant County, TX has served as an APC for nine years developing sophisticated emergency preparedness tools and products. As an APC, it has been a learning laboratory for biosurveillance, syndromic surveillance, readiness assessment, and workforce development and training with a focus on radiological/nuclear disasters, volunteer recruitment and retention, and all-hazards emergency preparedness.

### EXEMPLARY APC PRODUCT

#### **Pre-School and School Health Surveillance: A Guidance Kit**

<http://apc.naccho.org/Products/APC20102215/Pages/Overview.aspx>

Most recently updated in 2012, the *Pre-School and School Health Surveillance Guidance Kit* is a resource from The Southwest Center for Advanced Public Health Practice. Local health departments can use the *Guidance Kit* to build and implement an efficient Web-based system that facilitates health information exchange between their agency and the schools and childcare facilities in their jurisdiction. The *Guidance Kit* identifies multiple paths agencies may take, and offers more than one hundred resources via CD-ROM that may be used “as is,” or may be customized for unique needs. “Read first” instructions accompany each chapter and resource folder making the kit user-friendly and turnkey. Local health department staff members with any level of experience can successfully use the *Guidance Kit*. The Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) has called it a “promising practice for pandemic influenza preparedness.”

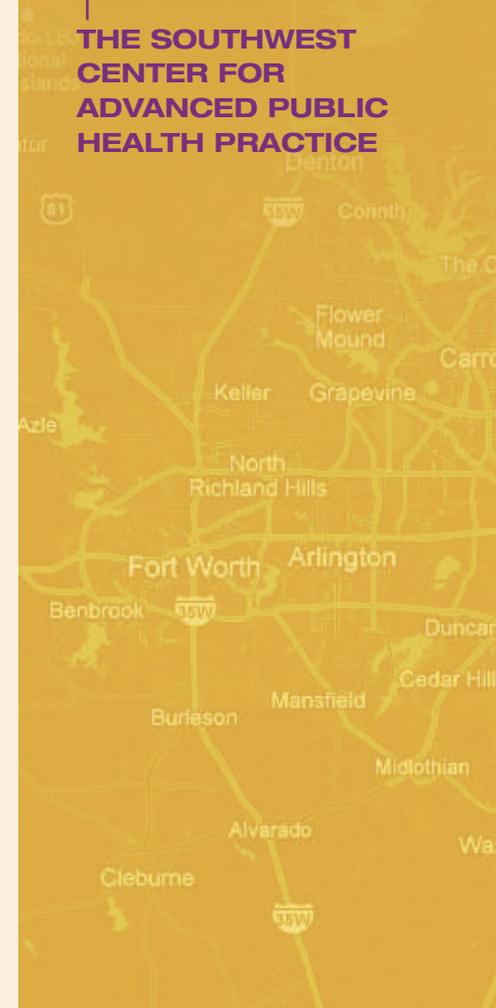
**Notable Feature:** The *Guidance Kit* includes “open source software” that may be lifted and re-used to set up a Web-based reporting portal for school health data surveillance. The use of open source software provides the most replicable, affordable and enduring solution for any health department, and minimal technical skills are required.

#### **PHEP Capabilities Supported by this APC Product:**

- Capability 6: Information Sharing
- Capability 13: Public Health Surveillance and Epidemiological Investigation



### THE SOUTHWEST CENTER FOR ADVANCED PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE



# APC PRODUCT IN PRACTICE

The **Oklahoma City-County Health Department** (OCCHD) worked with the Tarrant County APC to implement the *Pre-School and School Health Surveillance Guidance Kit* from September 2011 to March 2012. Prior to the 2012 school year, OCCHD had been using a manual reporting system with staff receiving and tallying information emailed in by schools on a daily basis. In 2012, OCCHD kicked off the new school year with a fully-automated reporting portal that was successfully implemented using the *Pre-School and School Health Surveillance Guidance Kit*. Cynthia Harry, MS, Interim Administrator of Epidemiology Services for OCCHD, was the lead on the project. OCCHD serves 718,000 residents and has approximately 280 employees.



## PROVIDED A HIGH QUALITY SOLUTION

“The Tarrant County APC *School Health Surveillance Guidance Kit* met our county’s needs,” confirmed Ms. Harry. “Our new Health Surveillance Portal is being used to collect and compile daily reporting data from schools across the county.”



## SAVED TIME

“Our past reporting structure [manual receipt and compilation of data submitted via excel spreadsheet] was not efficient. The portal we developed based on the *Guidance Kit* has automated the process. The schools also appreciate it, and find it easy to use. It’s a more efficient use of everyone’s time,” said Ms. Harry.



## SAVED RESOURCES

“Tarrant County put us in touch with the IT contractor they used to build their portal, and given this contractor’s experience with the open source software in the *Guidance Kit*, it proved to be an inexpensive solution that also brought a significant amount of knowledge and experience to our project,” shared Ms. Harry.



## INCLUDED CONSULTATIVE SUPPORT FROM APC STAFF

Ms. Harry said, “The Tarrant County APC staff has been an exceptional resource for troubleshooting. They provided excellent support as we developed our end-stage product.”



## ACHIEVED RESULTS

“We are using this product on a daily basis, and it is ensuring our school health surveillance is more complete, and therefore, more meaningful. It used to be difficult for us to tell when we were missing data. That is no longer the case, and given the ease and success of our experience to-date, we are investigating using the portal to collect data from additional sectors, potentially including dental health providers and veterinarians. We may even use it for community surveys,” shared Ms. Harry.