

2017 Annual Report of the Gillespie County Health Board

I. INTRODUCTION

The Gillespie County Public Health Division Cooperative Agreement provides for the creation of an Advisory Public Health Board, known as the Gillespie County Public Health Board, which shall recommend to the operating members (City of Fredericksburg and County of Gillespie) both substantive and procedural rules necessary and appropriate to protect the health and safety of the citizens of Gillespie County, Texas.

The *Gillespie County Health Board* respectfully submits this report for its 2017 activities, findings, and recommendations.

Members of the Health Board:

Brett Beyer – **Chairman**
Brenda Matysiak – **Vice Chairman**
John Dubea - **Secretary**
Cynthia England
Ruthann Hoover
David Kemp
Tammy Amerson – Wilson
Tom Hutton
Jodi Johnson

Ex-Officio Members:

Kelli Olfers

Note: Department of State Health Services has an office in Kerrville that serves both Kerr and Gillespie counties. Tenia Houck and Brenda Hulteen are the contacts for that office and they serve on several community organizations such as the Local Emergency Planning Committee.

II. SANITARIAN'S REPORT

The Gillespie County Health Division (GCHD) is staffed with a Registered Sanitarian who serves as the Director and an additional Registered Sanitarian with her Masters, who is the department's Food Safety Inspector. The GCHD strives to ensure residents receive the maximum protection in food sanitation and environmental health. The duties of this department include, but are not limited to: retail and institutional food inspections, environmental health inspections on daycares, public schools, foster homes and swimming pool inspections. Additionally, our office handles day to day calls, reports, accounting, plan reviews and environmental complaints and investigations.

The following new retail establishments received permits and opened or changed ownership in 2017: La Tequila Jalisco, 78624, Bella Sera, Just-Pop-N, Altstadt, Featherstone Ranch, Feast & Merriment, Jenschke Orchards, Enchanted Inn Restaurant, Navajo Grill, The Stable, 290 Diner, Cranky Franks, Nury's, Hoegemeyer's BBQ Hall, The Grill, Southold Farm and Cellar, Margarita Monkey's To Go, Pfister's BBQ & Tacos, Windcrest Inn & Suites, Contigo Ranch, Becker Farms, Narrow Path Winery, Home Town Pizza and Tropical Paradise.

As of December 31, 2017, 476 retail food inspections had been performed in 2017. This number does not include courtesy inspections, i.e. inspection approvals upon opening, during construction or follow up visits. There were 27 mobile permits issued this year as opposed to 23 the previous year.

With it being mandatory for all food and beverage employees to be certified food handlers, training for food handlers continues on a monthly basis. The Agri-Life Extension office has held 3 food manager certification classes this year. Additionally, many food service workers obtain their certifications online.

There were 325 temporary health permits issued this year as opposed to 273 permits issued last year. There were 245 retail health permits which was an increase of 3 %. The following is a list of some of the functions with temporary health permits inspected in Gillespie County:

- Fredericksburg Trade Days
- Texas VW Classic
- Peach Jamboree
- Lavender Festival
- Peddler Show
- Gillespie County Fair
- Fredericksburg Farmers Market
- Lutheran Fall Festival
- Mesquite Art Festival
- Gillespie County Horse Races
- Crawfish Festival
- Lonestar Street Rod
- Oktoberfest
- Food & Wine Fest
- Fredericksburg Vintage Car Swap
- Food Truck Festival
- Wings Over the Hill

The office of Sanitarian inspected 3 foster homes during 2017 and 11 daycare centers. Harper ISD, & Doss Consolidated have been inspected for health and safety. Fredericksburg ISD was under construction the majority of 2017. The Director of GCHD participates on several boards that meet on a regular basis.

- Local Emergency Planning Committee
- Needs Council Board Member
- Needs Council Interagency Meeting
- Create Healthy Community Council

III. REPORTABLE CONDITIONS

Texas Department of State Health Services
Health Service Region 8 Reportables 2017

	Year to date
Food Borne/Enteric	
<i>Campylobacter</i>	9
<i>E. coli O157:h7</i>	2
<i>Salmonellosis</i>	3
<i>Shigella</i>	1
<i>Trichinosis</i>	0
<i>Cryptosporidia</i>	1
<i>Shigellosis</i>	1
Vaccine-Preventable	
<i>Chicken Pox</i>	0
<i>Hepatitis A</i>	0
<i>Hepatitis B</i>	0
<i>H. influenza</i>	1
<i>Measles</i>	0
<i>Mumps</i>	0
<i>Pertussis</i>	1
<i>Rubella</i>	0
<i>Tetanus</i>	0
Other	
<i>Meningitis, Bacterial</i>	0
<i>Meningitis, Viral</i>	0
<i>Strep, invasive</i>	3
<i>Tuberculosis,</i>	0
<i>MRSA</i>	0
<i>Lyme disease</i>	0
<i>Vibrio Vulnificus</i>	1
<i>Chagas disease</i>	0
<i>Q-fever, Chronic</i>	1
<i>Cyclosporiasis</i>	1
<i>Vibriosis</i>	1

NOTE: It should be noted that this data may be inaccurate due to failure to report by various offices.

IV. BEHAVIORIAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

In January 2017, Emily Padula, Chief Strategy Officer for Hill Country Memorial Hospital spoke to the board on the recent community health needs assessment that was conducted in 2016. There were three priority action items that resulted from this assessment:

- Obesity prevention through exercise, nutrition and self-care
- Access to primary care, health education, and chronic disease management support
- Mental and behavioral health

Board members discussed ways to compliment the hospital's efforts on their proposed action plan to the community's health. The board expressed interest in previous meetings to address various types of no smoking policies around our community and to also evaluate possible programs or services that deal with safety when wine touring or experiencing too much alcohol at other establishments. From this discussion it was decided that we should solicit information from TABC, owners of wine touring businesses, wineries and local law enforcement. It was further deemed that the board should investigate the current no smoking ordinance and see what if anything needs to be addressed. These two behavioral health initiatives would be our focus for the year.

V. NO SMOKING ORDINANCE

On November 7, 2002, the Fredericksburg City Council passed ordinance number 12-018 SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES. This ordinance restricts smoking in all public places within the city limits as "*public place*" is defined in the ordinance. The Gillespie County Health Board has researched this topic this past year and concludes that the current ordinance needs to be updated to include items that were not in existence in 2002.

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States. Nearly one-half million Americans still die prematurely from tobacco use each year, and more than 16 million Americans suffer from a disease caused by smoking. Despite these risks, approximately 42.1 million U.S. adults currently smoke cigarettes. And the harmful effects of smoking do not end with the smoker. Secondhand smoke exposure causes serious disease and death, and even brief exposure can be harmful to health. Each year, primarily because of exposure to secondhand smoke, an estimated 7,330 nonsmoking Americans die of lung cancer and more than 33,900 die of heart disease. Coupled with this enormous health toll is the significant economic burden. Economic costs attributable to smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke now approach \$300 billion annually. *Source: CDC's Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs – 2014.*

E-cigarette use among U.S. youth and young adults is now a major public health concern. E-cigarette use has increased considerably in recent years, growing an astounding 900% among high school students from 2011 – 2015. These products are now the most commonly used form of tobacco among youth in the United States, surpassing conventional tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and hookahs. E-cigarettes contain nicotine, which can cause addiction and can harm the developing adolescent brain. Preventing tobacco use in any form among youth and young adults is critical to ending the tobacco epidemic in the United States. *Source: Vivek H. Murthy, M.D., M.B.A., U.S. Surgeon General.*

The Gillespie County Health Board met with the city's attorney to discuss updating the ordinance to include vaping and e-cigarette use. Discussion was brought up as to whether a no-smoking county order could be in place. This was discussed with the county attorney and it was confirmed that the county did not have authority to pass such a law. Additionally, there was some discussion that this proposed ordinance did not go far enough to protect the general public. It was decided that some ideas of how this might take effect would be listed as recommendations.

ACTION ITEM: On November 6, 2017 the revised SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES ordinance was presented to the City of Fredericksburg City Council for the first reading. No action was taken at that time. On November 20, 2017 the City of Fredericksburg City Council passed the 2nd reading of the updated SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES ordinance to include e-cigarettes and vaping.

VI. MITIGATION OF EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION / SAFE PRACTICES

The growth of wineries in the Texas Hill Country in the past ten to fifteen years has been a driving force for the local economy. With growth there is almost certainty of challenges. One of those challenges was identified as an area of concern by the Gillespie County Health Board, and felt further discussion, testimony, and information was needed to address the issue of excessive alcohol consumption associated with the increase in the number of wine tasting rooms, distilleries, and breweries in our area.

The obvious place to obtain information was contacting our local TABC representative, Joe Cronin. Mr. Cronin began his presentation by explaining that TABC reached out to the wineries last year and held an educational seminar with 25 wineries in attendance. Items that were discussed were – how to handle an intoxicated customer – how to set policies that don't encourage over consumption – set hours of operation that are not late – etc. Joe did say that there has been an increase in complaints and a good majority of those complaints are of over service. Anyone can file a complaint with TABC by contacting the field office directly, or you can e-mail your complaint to TABC and do so anonymously. Sixty to seventy percent of complaints are filed anonymously. Additionally, Joe spoke of how the wineries are implementing their own regulations to help with this problem. For example, many of the wineries are cutting back on the number of tour buses coming to their establishment. Because these are for hire transportation vehicles, customers are allowed legally to consume alcohol in transit between wineries. This sometimes does lead to over consumption which leads to problems at their tasting rooms.

Other information that the board found interesting was TABC certified training is not required in bars or wineries, however it is strongly encouraged. If the facility does not require it and a violation does occur, then the penalty is greater than if the facility requires their employees to have it. There is undercover work performed in the area by TABC approximately every other month.

Owners of tour businesses was the next area that the board wanted to investigate. Majesty Tours, 290 Wine Shuttle and Jim Thompson, a previous tour

business owner, all participated in the discussion. The goal was to find out how these businesses operate and also look at the challenges they have, and what safety precautions they instill in their business daily.

These businesses have several different types of tours available. The majority of these do pick up their guests at their lodging accommodations and bring them back and typically they tour 3 wineries only. There are a few that pick up and return at the visitor center and there are a few tours that visit 4 wineries. Both of these businesses do offer free water in their vehicles and do encourage their guests to keep hydrated. If they notice that their guests are becoming too intoxicated then they do not go on to the next winery. Most of the tours do offer some sort of boxed lunch with their tour. Quite a few of the wineries have gone to a reservation only type of business which does help with the crowd and the experience. It was explained that the tour businesses are trying to make sure that the wine tasting experience is a pleasant experience and not an all-out party. They do seek repeat business so it is in their best interest to offer a nice experience. The previous owner Jim Thompson said that his business was very straight forward in telling his customers that he did not offer booze cruises. Another good point he made was that communication is key – meaning the more you tell them about being responsible and set the rules from the beginning so as to clearly communicate what is expected. Many of the tour guides do have their TABC certification which does offer training on how to curtail over consumption. Additionally, many of the insurance companies do require background checks on their drivers. Some of the concerns these businesses expressed were the number of cars pulling out from Trade Days every 3rd weekend of the month. Another concern was the number of people that drive themselves, and they see them at the same wineries all day and notice there is not a designated driver. They also said that there should be more signs on 290 with the change in speed limit. They did mention that the reduction in speed on 290 has helped some.

Law enforcement was another area the Board wanted to visit with. Chief Deputy James Segner and Patrol Sergeant Breshears attended a regularly scheduled health board meeting. Chief Deputy Segner began by saying they do not receive many calls on wineries – he believes they police themselves. He also indicated he doesn't believe speed is an issue on 290– he believes it is a lack of a turning lane and lack of a shoulder on much of the highway. Because of this – he mentioned safety as a primary concern for his patrol deputies in stopping vehicles on 290. He also mentioned that many of the establishments in town over serve their customers. There are 4 deputies on duty at all time to serve the entire county. He did mention between the number of people that come and visit on the weekend in addition to local residents, the number of deputies is inadequate to serve the growing population. This is especially true when dealing with regular administration issues such as vacations or sick leave.

Patrol Sergeant Breshears cited many of the same concerns. He mentioned that people start at the wineries in the late morning, and then by the time they go out for dinner, they have already over consumed and yet they continue to consume at other establishments through the evening hours. He also indicated that today's City of Fredericksburg police force has the same number of officers as it did 14 years ago when he started on the force. He too spoke of the increase in population on weekends and how he feels there are not enough officers to respond adequately when an issue occurs.

The Board expressed interest in hearing testimony from a winery to get their perspective on this issue. Julie Herbort with Grape Creek Vineyard visited with the board on several issues. This facility has experienced a lot of growth in the past few years. This growth amounted to serving upwards of 1,500 people on any given Saturday. The business was challenged by the number of people showing up and realized it was taking away the positive experience that was intended for guest. Because of this, Grape Creek Vineyards management put several rules in place to try to get a better handle on the wine experience for their guests. The new rules specifically address Saturdays and include: limit the number of limos entering (no limos from SA or Austin); no bachelorette parties allowed on Saturdays; all persons must be 21 or older; no animals allowed; no open bottles allowed and all patrons are carded by greeters if age is questioned. Additionally, Grape Creek Vineyard hires a security guard on Saturdays and the facility closes at 5:30 pm every day. Grape Creek has 75 to 80 employees and each employee is required to sign their policy document annually. The tasting room in Fredericksburg closes at 7 pm on the weekend and 6 pm during the week. In addition to the above mentioned rules, they also do business with two shuttle services. The results of all these efforts has proven to reduce the number of patrons from 1,500 to 1,000 on any given Saturday. Mrs. Herbort did say with the addition of food on the premises, it has helped with over consumption issues with their customers at the winery. She does see a trend of more policies coming to continue to make the wine experience a great one. With the current policies in place, it does allow their business to be more selective on customers. The Main St. location does attract more “girl groups”, but also more families walking down Main St. They also experience more problems of people who have over consumed earlier in the day.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES:** Although this ordinance has been updated to include vaping and e-cigarette use, it is recommended that this health topic be reviewed in the future, to redefine the definition of “Public Place” to include other venues such as bars, parks and public work places.
- B. MITAGATION OF EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION / SAFE PRACTICES:** In review of all information presented this past year on the topic of excessive alcohol consumption and safe practices, it is respectfully recommended that both city and county elected officials budget for more patrol officers to meet the current demand of growth in our community.

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

This report is respectfully submitted to the City of Fredericksburg City Council and to the Gillespie County Commissioners Court. Please let us know if additional information is desired or if you would wish this report to be given orally at the Council Meeting or Commissioner’s Court.