

# Introduction

In today's world, people are able to access a variety of sources of health information through a multiplicity of channels. The latest and perhaps most promising avenue of delivering information is via the internet. Recent studies have recognized the use of the Internet as a source of health information, although no statistical data have been produced so far regarding the number and socio-demographic characteristics of Internet users specifically interested in online health information.

# Purpose

The Department of Public Health in Coles County, Illinois has many programs and services, as well as health information, to offer the residents of the county. Perhaps the biggest hurdle is informing the people that the services are available. The Coles County Community Health Plan, as part of the IPLAN process, delineates the need to develop a website to aid in improving the health of the community

## **About Coles County**

Coles County covers 507 square miles in east central Illinois, is ranked 52nd in size in the state of Illinois and 24th in population density. The population is approximately 51,000. It is located approximately equidistant from Chicago, Indianapolis, and St. Louis.

The county is divided into three school districts, Charleston, Mattoon, and Oakland. Eastern Illinois University (EIU) and Lake Land Community College (LLC) are both located in the county, the former being the county's largest employer. EIU has an enrollment of approximately 10,500 students and LLC's enrollment is approximately 5,400 students.

Coles County is served by AMTRAK and Greyhound. The Coles County Airport, located between Charleston and Mattoon, provides commercial, passenger, and freight services.

Located near the airport is Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center, a 200 bed facility which provides medical/surgical, intensive care, long-term care, obstetrics, pediatrics, and psychiatric in-patient services. It is also a trauma and cancer center.

# Methods

As part of an RMED community based project, I have assisted the Coles County Department of Public Health in the development of a website. Steps in the process included:

- Receiving approval from health department administration to develop the website. This proved to be no obstacle as they were eager to have someone work on the project and the price was right.
- Meeting with a Health Educator, to find out what information the health department wanted to provide via the website.
- Identifying a local business, Advantage Information Technologies, that would provide the website at no charge.
- Working with my father (conveniently the owner of the aforementioned business) on the actual layout of the website.

# Outcomes

The website layout is complete and running. The website is accessible through [www.colescounty.net](http://www.colescounty.net), which is the hub to reach most of the government websites of Coles County. The health department's webpage gives information about the programs and services available through the health department. Also, provided are links to various other webpages, including:

- Illinois Department of Public Health
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- U. of Illinois RMED Program
- EIU Health Services
- Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center

# Conclusion

The mission of the Coles County Health Department is to provide quality health services through prevention, education, health promotion, and protection efforts in a manner that ensures the dignity of each individual served. The development of a website for the Coles County Health Department can play a role in achieving that mission by providing information about the Health Department and what it has to offer the citizens of Coles County, Illinois.

## *Coles County Health Department*

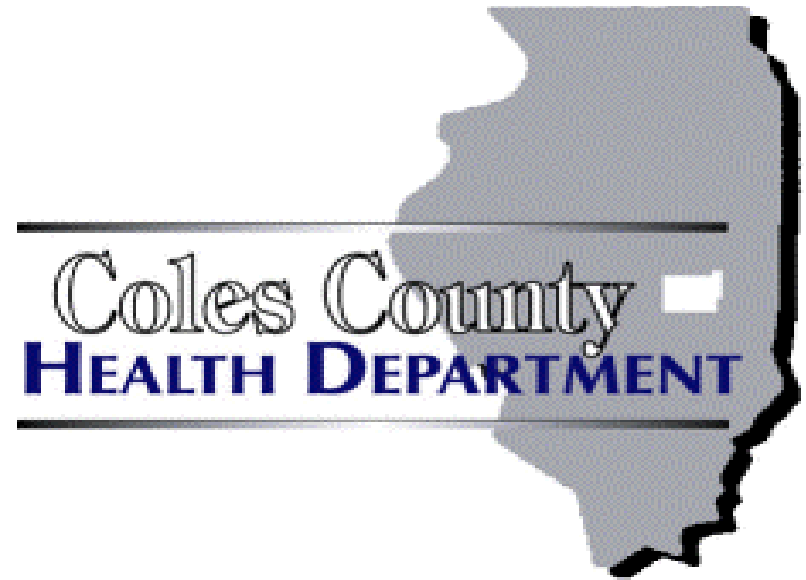
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### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Coles County Health Department is to provide quality health services through prevention, education, health promotion and protection efforts in a manner that ensures the dignity of each individual served.

## **Immunizations**

Available for anyone

- Infant and child immunizations
- Adult immunization
- Flu vaccine
- Pneumonia vaccine
- Lyme disease vaccine

## **International Travel**

Available for anyone

- Yellow fever center
- Travel vaccination consultation and administration
- Health and safety travel information

## **WIC-Special Supplemental Nutrition Program**

For pregnant, breast feeding & postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five

- Nutrition education and information
- Breastfeeding support, information, and pumps
- Food coupons for those who are eligible

## **Health Education**

Available for anyone

- Health education presentations
- Video library loan program
- Agency referrals
- Health fairs

## **Teen Parenting Services**

Available for pregnant and parenting teens 19 years, 9 months, or younger, who receive Kid Care assistance or TANF and do not have a high school diploma or GED

- Assistance with GED testing fees, transportation, school supplies, childcare and school registration

## **Communicable Diseases**

Available for anyone

- Investigation and follow-up of reportable communicable diseases
- Education and information

## **Wellness Checks**

Available for anyone

- Cholesterol testing
- Hemoglobin testing
- Blood sugar testing
- Weight measurement
- Blood pressure reading
- Chronic disease information

## **Family Case Management**

For pregnant women and families with children to the age of five years

- Physical and developmental assessment and screening
- Prenatal, infant and child care education
- Kid Care application agent
- High risk infant follow-up
- Service referrals

## **Dental Program**

2nd and 6th grade students eligible for the free or reduced lunch program in Coles County

- Dental inspection
- Dental sealants
- Dental referrals

## **Project Success**

Available for anyone

- School/community programs
- Agency linkages
- Lice education and information
- Health and human services for children and their families

## Family Planning

Available for women

- Pelvic exams
- Pap tests
- Breast exams
- Urinalysis
- Hemoglobin testing
- S.T.D. testing
- Pregnancy testing

Available for anyone

- Birth control and abstinence counseling and education
- Birth control supplies

## **HIV/AIDS Program**

Available for anyone

- Free, anonymous HIV/AIDS testing and counseling
- Education information and presentations
- Information on assistance for HIV positive people

## **Blood Lead Level Testing**

Children age 6 months to 6 years

- Lead level testing
- Lead poisoning information on prevention, intervention and home renovation

## **Environmental Health Services**

Available for anyone

- Food establishment and retail food store permits and inspections
- Temporary food stand permits
- Food service sanitation education
- Food-borne illness investigation
- Private water supply inspection, testing, and consultation
- Water well permits for new and modified wells
- Private sewage disposal investigation, inspection, and consultation
- Sewage permits for new private sewage disposal systems and repairs to private sewage disposal systems
- Nuisance complaint investigation
- Municipality advice and consultation on environmental problems

## Links

- [IDPH \(Illinois Department of Public Health\)](#)
- [IDHS \(Illinois Department of Human Services\)](#)
- [RMED \(University of Illinois College of Medicine Rural Medicine Program\)](#)
- [EIU Health Services](#)
- [SBLHC \(Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center\)](#)