

## Health Studies Program Investigations

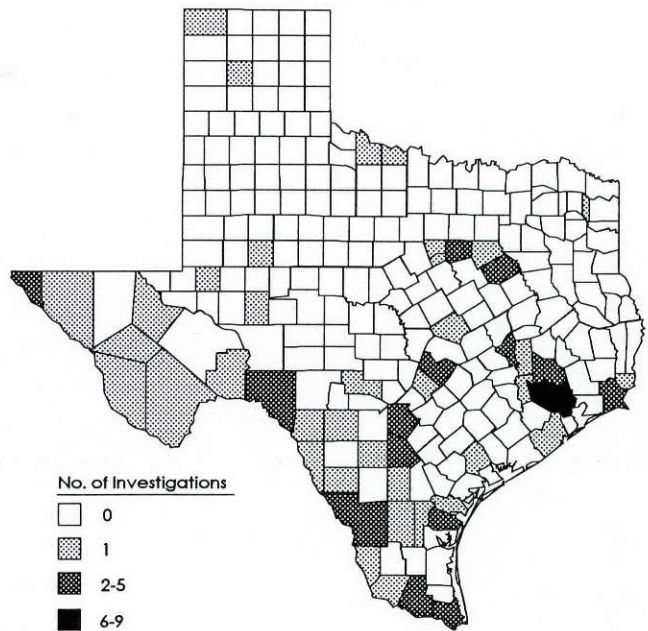
The Health Studies Program (HSP), formally established in 1993 as part of the Noncommunicable Disease Epidemiology and Toxicology Division, is responsible for the investigation of noninfectious disease clusters, special surveillance projects, and the design and implementation of epidemiologic health studies. Each year, HSP conducts a wide variety of investigations related to health and the environment.

Individual citizens, citizen groups, federal/state/local governmental agencies, environmental groups, and individual health professionals contact HSP with concerns that typically fall into two categories: concern that the incidence of a particular disease in a community is excessive and concern that an environmental exposure is causing a health risk in a community. HSP often works cooperatively with other Texas Department of Health (TDH) programs such as the Health Risk Assessment and Toxicology Program, the Texas Cancer Registry, and the Texas Birth Defects Monitoring Division to investigate these concerns. In addition, HSP works closely with local health departments; other state agencies including the Railroad Commission of Texas, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, the Texas Department of Agriculture; and federal agencies such as the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

### Investigation Sites

In 1996 HSP completed 50 investigations throughout the state. Investigations encompassed 51 counties. The scope of the investigation may have covered an entire county or, more typically, a city or town within that county. Each investigation may have involved an environmental and/or health-related concern. Figure 1 displays the counties and the number of investigations conducted per county. Harris County accounted for the largest number of investigations with nine investigations completed for Houston/Harris County in 1996.

Figure 1. Health Studies Program Investigations



### Environmental Concerns

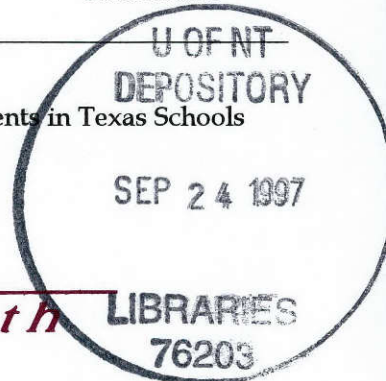
The types of environmental issues addressed (including the number of investigations) are as follows:

- ◆ general environmental concerns (14)
- ◆ industrial emissions (12)
  - ▶ refinery operations (4)
- ◆ drinking water contamination (6)
- ◆ general chemical concerns (6)
- ◆ indoor air problems (5)
- ◆ Federal/State Superfund sites (4)
- ◆ landfill issues (3)

Continued

Also in this issue:

Immunization Requirements in Texas Schools





## Health Concerns

Health concerns included chronic diseases (50%), adverse reproductive outcomes (20%), and other miscellaneous conditions (30%) such as rashes, respiratory conditions, and cardiovascular problems. The majority (70%) of investigations addressed the following concerns:

### Chronic Diseases

- ◆ cancer (18)
- ◆ Henoch-Schonlein purpura (1)
- ◆ autoimmune disorders (6)
  - ▶ systemic lupus erythematosus (4)
  - ▶ multiple sclerosis (1)
  - ▶ amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) (1)

### Adverse Reproductive Outcomes

- ◆ birth defects (5)
  - ▶ Down syndrome (1)
  - ▶ neural tube defects (4)
- ◆ developmental delays (1)
- ◆ spontaneous abortion (2)
- ◆ other general adverse reproductive outcomes (2)

Among chronic diseases, cancer accounts for the largest number of investigations (18). HSP works closely with the Texas Cancer Registry to

address all cancer-related concerns. In the past several years, however, there has been a marked increase in the number of requests for HSP to investigate autoimmune disorders such as systemic lupus erythematosus and multiple sclerosis. Beginning in late 1997, HSP will collaborate with the Health Risk Assessment and Toxicology Program and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry in an investigation of a possible increase in the incidence of multiple sclerosis in an El Paso community.

Birth defects also account for a large proportion of complaints in the category of adverse reproductive outcomes. HSP works closely with the Texas Birth Defects Monitoring Division when responding to concerns regarding birth defects. In 1996, HSP assisted this division with an extensive investigation of Down syndrome in Ellis, Hood, Johnson, and Somervell Counties.

*For further information contact Amber Isaacs at (512) 458-7222.*



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## Immunization Requirements in Texas Schools

Local school districts and health departments have authority to establish various health-related admission requirements, such as vision, hearing, and tuberculosis testing. These policies vary among schools according to the unique epidemiologic profile of the community and the students. Minimum immunization requirements for enrollment, however, are regulated by state law.

Children on an optimum immunization schedule will have received the following vaccinations by the time they enter kindergarten: 5 diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis (DTP); 4 polio (OPV or IPV); 3 or more *Haemophilous influenzae* type b (Hib); 3 hepatitis B; 2 measles/mumps/rubella (MMR); and 1 varicella. *Minimum Vaccination Requirements for Children and Students* (next page) specifies by age group the vaccinations children and students must have to attend child-care facilities and public or private schools. Included are revisions the Texas Board of Health made in March 1997.

## Minimum Vaccination Requirements for Children and Students in Texas Schools and Child-Care Facilities

Age	Requirement
2 months through 3 months	1 dose polio vaccine 1 dose DTP/DTaP vaccine 1 dose Hib vaccine
4 months through 5 months	2 doses polio vaccine 2 doses DTP/DTaP vaccine 2 doses Hib vaccine
6 months through 11 months	2 doses polio vaccine 3 doses DTP/DTaP vaccine 2 doses Hib vaccine
12 months through 14 months	3 doses polio vaccine 3 doses DTP/DTaP vaccine 2 doses Hib vaccine 1 dose MMR vaccine received on/after 1st birthday <sup>1</sup>
15 months through 4 years	3 doses polio vaccine 4 doses DTP/DTaP 1 dose Hib vaccine on/after age 15 mos. (unless primary series and booster were completed prior to age 15 mos.) 1 dose MMR vaccine received on/after 1st birthday <sup>1</sup>
5 years and older*	3 doses polio vaccine (including 1 on/after 4th birthday) <sup>2</sup> 4 doses DTP/DTaP vaccine (including 1 on/after 4th birthday) <sup>3</sup> and 1 dose within the last 10 years 1 dose MMR vaccine on/after 1st birthday <sup>1</sup> . Children born on or after 9/2/91 must have a 2nd dose of measles vaccine. <sup>4</sup>

***\*Effective 8/1/98, children 5 years old and older who were born on or after 9/2/92 must have 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine.***

### Footnotes

1. MMR (or 1 dose of each component) must have been received on or after the 1st birthday if the vaccine was administered on or after 9/1/90. Measles vaccine received prior to 9/1/90 may have been administered in the calendar month of the 1st birthday. (See Sections 97.63 and 97.67 of the Texas Administrative Code for guidelines regarding serologic confirmation of infection in lieu of vaccination.)
2. Polio vaccination not required for students 18 years of age and older.
3. Only 3 doses DTP are required for children 7 years old and older. Pertussis vaccination is not required for children 5 years of age and older.
4. This measles dose may be part of a 2nd MMR. Children born 9/1/78-9/1/91 (inclusive) must have documentation that a 2nd dose of measles vaccine was received within 30 days of the 12th birthday.





The electronic versions of *Disease Prevention News* are available at the following locations:

<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/phpep/dpnhome.htm>

TDH Healthy Texans BBS: (800) 858-5833

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### *Immunization, continued*

The *Texas Administrative Code*, Title 25, Health Services, Sections 97.61-97.77, contains the full provisions of state law regulating immunization. The entire document is on the Secretary of State Web Site: <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/tac>. Sections pertaining to immunization regulations are also available on the TDH Web Site at <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/lawsreg.htm>.

**Enrollment:** By the first day of attendance, all children and students admitted to child-care facilities, public schools, nonpublic schools, criminal justice facilities, or mental health facilities must provide proof of compliance with all required immunizations. (Section 97.61) **Provisional enrollment** may be allowed if a student has received the first dose in each required series and continues to receive subsequent vaccinations as soon as medically feasible. (Section 97.71)

**Documentation:** Any validated document of immunization is acceptable, provided it shows the month, day, and year of vaccination. The month, day, and year the vaccine was received also must be recorded on all school immunization records created or updated after 9/21/91. (Section 97.73)

**Exclusions:** Texas law provides for exclusions from compliance for medical contraindications, religious conflicts, and active duty with the United States armed forces. (Section 97.62)

For further assistance, contact your local immunization program or Kristin Hamlett, TDH Immunization Division, (800) 252-9152.