

# Care, Comfort and Hope

## Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits

### Existing, Emerging and Re-emerging Communicable Diseases

Wisconsin's ability to be a leader in the detection of and response to emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases has largely been the result of astute observation by hospital clinicians and public health employees. Hospitals are well aware of their role in protecting the general health of the community. In particular, they work closely with public health departments to promote immunization clinics and build community awareness on how to protect against the spread of communicable disease.

#### ***Immunizations and back-to-school supplies – a good combination***

It was hard to believe summer was ending and kids across Milwaukee were heading back to school. It was also hard to believe how much money parents are expected to spend on school supplies. Gone are the days when an old fashioned number two pencil and a taste for knowledge were all you needed to succeed. Soaring prices and longer supply lists put a strain on pocketbooks and leave many parents scrambling for items at the last minute.

That's precisely the reason that Froedtert Hospital teamed up with Westside Healthcare Association, a Federally Qualified Health Center, to make sure children returned to school both healthy and prepared. In response to the back-to-school rush for check-ups and vaccinations, Westside Healthcare held special immunization clinics in August 2008. As an added bonus, Froedtert Hospital donated backpacks filled with the necessary school supplies which were given to each child that came in for an appointment during those times.

More than 65 children received backpacks as part of the immunization clinic at Westside Healthcare Association. Many of them were students of Westside Academy, where Froedtert Hospital provides funding for a school nurse. In fact, the program was so successful that the clinic hosted another event in October.

**Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital, Milwaukee**

#### ***Hands-on experience helps little hands (and big ones) come clean***

St. Joseph's Hospital is tackling a big health concern – the spread of infection – by educating the smallest members of the community. At health fairs, community events and in schools around West Bend and Washington County, the importance of hand washing as the single most important procedure for preventing the spread of infection (US Centers for Disease Control) is getting attention. Pat Pearson, infection preventionist at St. Joseph's Hospital, leads the charge.

At *Celebrate Families* at the Washington County Fair Park, to young and old, she dispensed free sanitizers and provided important advice about how and when to use the alcohol product and when to wash your hands. The event drew about 5,000 people, mostly families with children, for free music, games and hands-on activities. Organizers' concerns about the frequent spread of germs with so many children in a high-contact venue made hand hygiene a perfect theme for St. Joseph's booth activity.

At the Women's Fair event March 21, Pat walked through the crowd carrying a cheery basket over her arm filled with small purse-size bottles of alcohol hand sanitizer which she distributed. More than 700 people were in attendance. Pat has been front and center at events like *Celebrate Families* and the women's fair sponsored by St. Joseph's Hospital, West Bend Clinic and Community Memorial Hospital in March. She's also used the hospital's "Glow Germ" kit to show kids what really clean hands are, and loans the kit to area schools and scout troops. Children are asked to put the special Glow Germ lotion on their hands, look at their hands under the special UV light and then wash their hands with soap and water as they normally do. When they return and hold their hands under the UV light they can see how well they washed. The children are surprised to see how much glow lotion remains on around fingernails and between fingers!

"Kids really want to do it – and parents do too. We tell children that to wash properly, they should wash their hands

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## Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits (continued)

with soap and warm water for about 10 to 15 seconds – the time it takes for them to sing the ‘ABC Song’ or ‘Yankee Doodle Dandy.’”

Pat is encouraged by the community response: “Actually, people are savvier these days – parents know the importance of teaching and role modeling good hand hygiene for their children.”

**St. Joseph’s Hospital, West Bend**

***Submit community benefit stories to Mary Kay Grasmick, editor, at [mgrasmick@wha.org](mailto:mgrasmick@wha.org).***



Read more about hospitals connecting with their communities at [www.WiServePoint.org](http://www.WiServePoint.org).