

Hosparus offers innovative program

BY CLEVIS JEFFRIES
STAFF WRITER

Hosparus Health of Green River Outreach Manager Jennifer Van Mersbergen shared with Greenburg Rotary members April 2 the nonprofit organization's Ambassador Program.

The innovative program is an extension of its volunteer staff program.

"The Ambassador Program is designed to make connections in our community. We



Photo by Clevis Jeffries
Jennifer Van Mersbergen

know that if people understand our services

before they need us, they are more likely to contact us when they do. The ambassadors are the connectors," said Van Mersbergen.

The ambassador serves as an active leader and possesses a passion for servant leadership, giving their time and talents to provide high quality compassionate care to as many people as possible.

Van Mersbergen noted that Hosparus Health of Green River needs additional volunteers to help

educate people in the 5-county coverage area about the group's services.

The outreach manager said that some 64 percent of those eligible to receive services in the coverage area of Adair, Green, Marion, Taylor, and Washington Counties are not benefiting from Hosparus Health's assistance.

She talked about the requirements to become an ambassador, including attending an orientation and

quarterly meetings, familiarizing oneself with the services that the organization provides and becoming a spokesperson for Hosparus Health, assisting in the recruitment of other volunteers or ambassadors.

"Becoming an ambassador is simple. (It involves) a basic overview of hospice and palliative care and a quarterly meeting which brings us together to share stories and ideas on how we can continue

to educate and connect people to our organization who are in need," the outreach manager said.

To learn more about the Ambassador Program, visit the website www.HosparusHealth.org.

One may also inquire about Hosparus Health and the services offered by the organization by emailing Jennifer Van Mersbergen at JVanMersbergen@Hosparus.org or phone 270-403-2413.

E. coli cases linked to outbreak across KY

Public Advised to Note Signs and Symptoms, Seek Follow-Up Care if Needed

The Kentucky Department for Public Health announced last week that 20 Kentuckians have tested positive with a strain of E. coli O103. Public health investigators have not yet identified the source of the outbreak, but have noted that some sort of food distribution is a likely mechanism for this outbreak among many of the individuals afflicted by the sometimes life-threatening bacteria.

The reported cases involve a number of children as well as adults, many of whom reside in Central Kentucky. No deaths linked to the outbreak have been reported but six people have been hospitalized.

Healthcare providers across the state have been notified of the outbreak and are advised to be alert for patients experiencing acute diarrheal illness, which could be associated with E. coli. Appropriate testing and investigative work will need to be completed to determine which cases are outbreak-associated. This is a particular strain of E. coli that produces a type of toxin (Shiga toxin) that can be dangerous for those infected.

"Exposure to E. coli bacteria can be debilitating and potentially life-threatening, especially for small children and individuals with weakened immune systems. With this in mind, the Department for Public Health has taken swift action to identify patients, ensure appropriate testing, and follow up care as we work to determine the source of the outbreak," said DPH Commissioner Dr. Jeff Howard. "Healthcare providers across Kentucky have been alerted to this potential threat and are working with us to make sure patients are identified and are receiving appropriate care. Meanwhile, we encourage all Kentuckians to be aware of the signs and

symptoms of E. coli illness and to seek care if they are ill."

Symptoms of E. coli O103 illness typically include stomach cramps and diarrhea, including bloody diarrhea, and people generally become ill two to five days after consuming contaminated food. E. coli O103 disease sometimes leads to hemolytic-uremic syndrome (HUS), a serious complication that can cause kidney failure and can occur a week or more after the onset of diarrhea. Those most at risk of developing complications from E. coli infection include the very young, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems. State health officials are working with staff at local health de-

partments in the counties with suspected or confirmed cases to determine the source of the infections.

The public can help prevent E. coli infections by;

Washing hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water, especially before eating, after going to the bathroom, handling raw meat and eggs, and after handling or petting animals;

Thoroughly washing produce before eating;

Thoroughly cooking meat;

Cleaning and sanitizing food preparation areas;

Avoiding swallowing lake or pool water;

Drinking only pasteurized milk;

Frequently cleaning and sanitizing restrooms, including door knobs and faucets; and

Reporting diarrheal illnesses to your physician.

If you believe you have experienced symptoms of illness that could be associated with this E. coli outbreak, please consult your health care provider or your local health department.

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Chair exercise with GCPL



Photo submitted

Every Tuesday at 1 p.m. CT, Ms. Missy Curry with the Green County Public Library holds chair exercise classes in the senior center behind the library. These exercises are low impact, high reward and help those with limited mobility to keep moving.

HWC promotes obesity prevention



Photo by Clevis Jeffries

The Green Co. Health and Wellness Coalition held its regular quarterly meeting at the Green Co. Cooperative Extensive Service March 27. Lisa Allen, of Lake Cumberland Community Action, and other community partners and leaders shared information and resources regarding obesity prevention and what actions our community can take to overcome this barrier.

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