

# STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



sure every piece of information is properly investigated and processed.

"I could see (a chief investigator proposal) if it worked within the framework of the multidisciplinary teams," Boyd said. "I think I would be more comfortable with someone who was designated as a coordinator, rather than a chief investigator, simply because they could be responsible for coordinating the investigation, as well as ensuring compliance with any court orders involved in a case."

That, Boyd admits, may not be a popular position because it implies added costs.

Boyd said she plans to author more child abuse legislation to be considered by the 46th Legislature, much of which will focus on prevention efforts.

—SHAWN ASHLEY  
11/13/96

## HEPATITIS A EPIDEMIC CONTINUES

■(GIT)The State Health Department is drafting a budget proposal to request additional funding from the state legislature to develop a more comprehensive system for dealing with contagious disease outbreaks, said Lauri Smithee, director of Communicable Disease for the State Health Department.

Oklahoma is experiencing a rise in the number of cases of Hepatitis A, Salmonella and E. Coli 0157:H7 infections, Smithee said.

Hepatitis A has reached epidemic proportions in central and western Oklahoma counties — including Oklahoma, Stephens, Garfield and Pottawatomie counties. Cases of Salmonella and E.Coli. have significantly increased this year, also, the director said.

The first cases of Hepatitis A were reported in far eastern Oklahoma in 1994, said Dr. J.R. Nida, State Health Department Commissioner of Health. The average number of cases per year prior to 1994 was 345 cases of Hepatitis A. Smithee said 2,139 cases of Hepatitis A have been reported to date this year.

The director said that part of the epidemic can be attributed to natural processes. In the United States, the number of cases rise approximately every 10 years because the number of people who have never been infected has increased, she said.

Another contributing factor is the increase in 20- to 40-year-olds who participate in parties where drugs are used or

shared, Smithee said.

Hepatitis A can be contracted from intimate (and sexual) contact with people who are carrying the virus. Hepatitis A is carried in fecal material and people who do not wash their hands can spread it to foods, which people eat and ingest the virus. Carriers of the virus are contagious for as long as a month, she said.

Hepatitis A is a liver disease that can result in fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and generalized weakness, Nida said. These symptoms may be followed in a few days by darkened urine and yellow eyes and skin.

Nida also said that those with chronic liver disease are at increased risk for complications and death due to infection from this disease.

Those at high risk of acquiring hepatitis A are children who attend a child care setting such as day care, persons whose children attend a child care center or similar institution. Also, persons who live in or travel to counties with epidemic rates of hepatitis A or persons who travel internationally to developing countries where hepatitis A is endemic have increased risk or infection, Nida said.

The State Health Department has issued public health warnings. Also, Smithee said the department is currently working on a media campaign. Immune globulin can be effective in preventing the disease if it is administered within a short time after exposure.

Salmonella, on the other hand, is transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated food, such as chicken and eggs. The foods transmit the bacteria when they are not cooked properly, the director said.

*"Tome the foundation of American life rests upon the home and the family. I read into these great economic forces, these intricate and delicate relations of the government with business and with our political and social life, but one supreme end ... that we strengthen the security, the happiness, and the independence of every home."*

Herbert Hoover  
speech at Palo Alto, California  
Aug. 11, 1928

The best way to prevent Salmonella poisoning is to wash fruits and vegetables and to properly cook meats.

E.Coli 0157:H7 cases have increased since the United States began requiring that all cases be reported, Smithee said. She also added that laboratories have gotten better at identifying the bacteria.

The bacteria is transmitted through improperly cooked ground beef.

—MICHELLE BOYD WATERS  
11/14/96

## REVENUE & TAXATION

### OKLAHOMA GENERAL REVENUES UP, AHEAD OF FORECAST

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) General Revenue collections for Oklahoma, including the four major tax sources, topped last year's figures, and last year's projection, for the first one-third of this fiscal year, Director of State Finance Tom Daxon said Tuesday. One key indicator, the sales tax, lagged behind the monthly estimate for October.

Collections for general revenue totaled \$288.8 million for October and \$1.197 billion for the first four months of the fiscal year ending October 31.

The October figure was up \$14.4 million, or 5.2 percent above a year ago, and exceeded the estimate by \$13.8 million, or five percent. The year-to-date total was up \$82.2 million, or 7.4 percent from the prior year and was \$55.5 million, or 4.9 percent above the estimate.

Estimates are based on historical collection patterns for the month and year to date as applied to the State Board of Equalization's certified estimate for the 1997 fiscal year.

More than two-thirds of the revenue above the estimate was in income and gross production taxes. Income tax collections for the four-month period topped last year's by 6.9 percent, even topping the estimate by 4.1 percent. Gross production tax receipts, reflecting higher oil and gas prices, were up 30 percent from last year and 40.6 percent above the estimate.

Sales taxes, the second largest source of general revenue, were up 4.8 percent from a year ago and two percent above the estimate in the cumulative total for the first four months, even though they trailed the estimate

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