

HISTORY

OF THE

ECTOR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Ector County Health Department was established by the Odessa City Council and the Ector County Commissioners' Court in August 1941 with temporary space provided in the basement of the Ector County Courthouse.

The initial effort and leadership to organize a public health department in Odessa/Ector County came from the Odessa Junior Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Malvern McDonald was appointed chairman of a committee to formulate proposals and options for presentation to governmental bodies in Ector County. Mr. McDonald and his committee worked closely with Mr. S. E. Barnett, Registered Sanitarian, with the state health department to conceptualize and organize a local public health department in Odessa/Ector County.

Mayor R. T. Waddell and County Judge A. H. Dennison presented plans for the creation of the Ector County Health Department to city and county officials with a formula for sharing expenses between the two entities. The concept was approved and funding provided on August 13, 1941. The initial staff consisted of one nurse, Miss Mona Lee McCarty. Within a short time, Miss McCarty was joined by Seth W. Kellem, M.D., Director, Earl W. Sudderth, Sanitary Engineer, S. E. Barnett, Senior Sanitarian, and Miss Marian Marlin, Clerk.

The Federal Works Agency approved a grant of \$26,000 for the construction of a public health center in Odessa/Ector County on February 21, 1942. The Ector County Commissioners' Court also appropriated \$10,000 for the construction. In March 1942, Judge Dennison announced the award of contract to the firm of Hill and Coughran of Midland to build the 4,200 sq. ft. public health facility. Judge Dennison also declared at the time that Doctor W.S. Brummage would be the new health unit director during the construction period. Ector County's first public health department was completed and occupied by health department personnel in October 1942.

In October 1974, Ector County Health Department staff moved to the old U. S. Post Office building on Texas St. - a 17,000 square foot facility newly renovated with federal revenue sharing funds.

Through childhood immunizations, treatment of contagious diseases, vector control, animal control, health education, food service sanitation, water quality, sanitation inspections, child/adult health clinics and disease investigations, dedicated public health nurses, sanitarians, health inspectors, and physicians have worked to control the communicable diseases in Ector County since 1941. These folks are the Ector County Health Department.