Home and Community Services Uses New Technology to Better Serve Physicians and Patients

A physician in Houston County is enjoying his first cup of coffee at home at 5:30 a.m. when he opens an email reminder prompting him that he has unsigned physician orders. He then uses his unique password to log in to a secure website, reviews the homebound patient’s vital signs and blood sugar ranges, and electronically signs orders for her care before leaving his house for the day. The internist has been participating in a pilot study which will be implemented by the Bureau of Home and Community Services statewide this month.

In an ongoing process to better serve patients and medical providers, the department recently added Horizon Home Care Physician Portal/Web Chart to its database. This is a web-based secure online service which provides physicians access to their patients’ home health records 24 hours a day. This means physicians are able to review patient medications and treatment plans, and sign documentation online at no additional cost to them.

Previously, the process of issuing orders might have taken several days or even weeks because it involved printing a form, obtaining a physician’s signature, and mailing the form to the home health subunit. The implementation of this new technology will reduce time in completing paperwork so that physicians can allocate more of their time to their patients. It will also increase efficiency in patient care and reduce treatment errors.

Overseeing this project has been Nurse Consultant Michele Paramore of the Home Care Services Division, who has been demonstrating the Horizon Homecare Physician Portal/Web Chart to medical providers. She has received a very positive response, and said, “The physicians recognize that this will provide an opportunity to increase the quality of patient care as well as reduce administrative time for themselves and their staff. It also should save time for our home health support staff.”

Physicians can review their patient’s medications, vital signs, diagnosis, reasons for admission, allergies, surgical history and emergency contacts through the secure site anywhere and anytime. They can also elect to have their office staff view the current list of medications, but only the physician can sign orders.

The pilot program was conducted with specific physicians across eight counties.
You are a helpful assistant. Do not hallucinate.

Choose Healthful Vending Machine Fare

Stop to consider the choices you are making before you insert your dollar bill or drop your change into a vending machine to grab a snack. Is it a healthful selection, or is it a food or drink that is low in nutrition and high in calories?

“The vision of the Alabama Department of Public Health is for Alabamians of all ages to embrace a culture of healthy choices as their normal way of life,” Miriam Gaines, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity director, said. In furtherance of that goal, the Health Department partnered with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services to develop a vending machine policy for pilot building locations in state agencies. The policy strives to make positive environmental changes by replacing unhealthful food and beverage options with more nutritious selections to support healthy behavior.

ADPH has also partnered with Canteen Vending to implement the healthy vending options in private entities. Baptist Health Systems, Jackson Hospital and East Alabama Medical Center are among the private sector businesses offering healthier vending machine options to their employees and customers using the “Good Choice” nutrition criteria.

The overall goal of this policy is to offer healthy choices while still allowing for free choice. Nutrition criteria were developed and used to identify healthful snacks. The policy specifies that 30 to 100 percent of food in vending machines meet the following criteria for each individual serving:

• 10 percent or less of the daily value of fat

With sufficient notice, IT can provide training statewide. A portable classroom can accommodate up to 10 students per class. Classes of up to 20 students are possible if the training space is adequately sized and if additional equipment is provided. If travel is required for the instructor, requesting offices are responsible for the travel-related expenses.

For questions or more information regarding Microsoft Office 2007 training, please email IT.Training@adph.state.al.us.
Dr. Mark Wilson Appointed to Jefferson County Post

Upon the retirement of Dr. Michael E. Fleenor, Dr. Mark E. Wilson was appointed the health officer for Jefferson County, CEO of the Jefferson County Department of Health and area health officer for Public Health Area 4 effective Oct. 1. Dr. Wilson has supported the many activities of the Health Action Partnership, a coalition of local agencies committed to improving health and quality of life in Jefferson County. Dr. Wilson’s service to his community extends over his 20-year career as a physician and Chief of Staff at Cooper Green Mercy Hospital, a clinical teacher for UAB Medicine students and residents, and a member of both the Jefferson County Medical Society Board and the Jefferson County Board of Health. He has also served on other local boards and has been involved with national organizations that focus on the poor and underserved, and on ensuring availability of quality health care for everyone. Dr. Wilson received his Bachelor of Civil Engineering degree from Georgia Institute of Technology and his medical degree from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Dr. Wilson and his wife, Marian, have four children.

Molly Killman Awarded Jack Davis Professional Achievement Award

The University of Alabama College of Human Environmental Sciences presented the Jack Davis Professional Achievement Award to Molly Killman, assistant director of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, during homecoming activities on campus Oct. 7 and 8.

The Jack Davis Professional Achievement Awards are presented annually to outstanding UA College of Human Environmental Sciences alumni for their professional accomplishments. Ms. Killman is president-elect of the Alabama Dietetic Association and is secretary of the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors. She earned a bachelor’s degree in nutrition and food science from Auburn University and a master’s degree in nutrition from the University of Alabama.

Dr. Jack Davis, the first male graduate of the college, was a pioneer in emphasizing nutrition and dentistry.

Vending, continued from page 2

- 10 percent or less of the daily value of carbohydrates
- 5 percent or more of the daily value of at least one: fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium or iron
- 360 milligrams or less of sodium.

Some employees who work in the buildings where the “Good Choice” practice has been implemented have been surprised to learn that appealing snacks are also nutritious. Instead of buying an item of minimal nutritional value, they now opt for food and beverages that promote good health.

In addition to workplaces, the State Board of Education has the same nutritional standards for school vending machines. This works to reinforce the same nutrition message. By using the same nutrition standards, families learn the same selection criteria--at work and at school. “What we are hoping is these skills will be used when selecting snacks at other locations, such as the grocery store or gas station,” states Registered Dietitian Teresa Fair.

In recommending more healthful snacks in schools, policy makers noted, “Eating patterns developed as a child can influence the long-term nutritional status and have a significant impact on the risks--or preventing risks--of chronic diseases of childhood.”

Ms. Gaines said, “While the improvements these policy changes represent may be gradual, they mean Alabamians are willing to make changes that will reduce the worsening obesity epidemic. Try to make good choices for your health every day.”
Time is critical in saving lives after a patient suffers a heart attack, and many patients in Baldwin and Mobile counties now benefit from a coordinated system of life-saving treatment. It begins when 9-1-1 is called and paramedics perform early 12-lead electrocardiograms (ECGs) while en route to the hospital.

Capt. Jack Busby of the Mobile Fire Department is enthusiastic about the advanced system that can mean the difference between life and death, depending on the patient’s condition. He said, “Our firemedics bring the technology and medications of the emergency room to the patient’s side.”

ECGs are usually done in hospital emergency rooms to aid in the diagnosis of a heart attack and monitor heart rhythm. An early ECG saves precious minutes by allowing the patient to go straight from the ambulance to the cardiac catheterization laboratory where blocked arteries can be opened.

Medical authorities associate delays in receiving angioplasty with higher mortality in heart attack patients, and time to treatment should be as short as possible. As much as 40 minutes can be saved by having the ECG and medications prior to hospital arrival. It can take up to 10 minutes to perform the ECG in the emergency department plus 30 minutes call-back time for the catheterization lab team to arrive if they are not already in the hospital.

The American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology recommend a 90-minute door-to-balloon coronary angioplasty time to restore blood flow to the heart. Time saved prior to hospital admission can help preserve the heart muscle.

“Ninety minutes is the national standard time, but our system in Baldwin County has greatly improved on that time,” Jamie Hinton of Medstar Emergency Medical Service said. “We have it down to a science.”

The following is an example of how the system works. In a recent situation in southern Baldwin County, a patient with chest pains phoned EMS at 1:30 a.m. and the 9-1-1 operator received pertinent information and instructed the patient to take an aspirin. After the EMTs arrived and set out for the hospital, they placed a 12-lead ECG monitor on his chest and transmitted the results to an on-call cardiologist. The inexpensive system used a Bluetooth connection to a cell phone to send the results to a server. The server sent it out as a fax to the hospital. The medics placed the patient on oxygen, established two intravenous lines, and administered the appropriate medications.

Meanwhile at the hospital, the cardiologist, several nurses and technicians all mobilized to respond quickly. Just 39 minutes later the patient underwent a blockage-clearing procedure at the catheterization laboratory. Now recovered, the patient credited the team with saving his life by their early diagnosis and preparation.

While the technology to expedite 12-lead ECGs in ambulances has existed for a number of years, Springhill Medical Center in Mobile and the three facilities in Baldwin County (Thomas Hospital, South Baldwin Regional Medical Center and North Baldwin Infirmary) are among the hospitals in Alabama that use this effective system.

The approved cardiac catheterization lab in Baldwin County is located at Thomas Hospital in Fairhope, so patients from more distant areas of the county are first taken to the hospital closest to them. While remaining on their stretcher, they are treated with thrombolytic drugs to dissolve blood clots and then are sent directly to Thomas Hospital’s cath lab.

Staff members from the hospitals meet monthly to help improve the system. When an issue that needs to be corrected arises, the cardiologists and others members of the coordinated team track it down and solve it.
Residents of all ages in Dallas, Perry and Sumter counties now have greater access to library books that support healthy lifestyle behaviors, thanks to Alabama’s Strategic Alliance for Health Program.

Posters placed in locations throughout the community encourage the public to “jump into a new book because the journey to health and wellness can start with a good book” from their local library. Additionally, fliers were distributed to faith-based institutions, schools and local venues. Newspapers announced the addition of the books to local libraries.

Alabama’s Strategic Alliance for Health program is a five-year initiative to create healthier communities in Alabama’s Black Belt Region and West Alabama through sustainable, evidence- and practice-based community health program and chronic disease prevention initiatives.

The Strategic Alliance for Health team, with the assistance of the community consortiums developed in each county, assessed and documented policies, systems and environmental supports currently in place in their counties. As they identified interventions to implement throughout the country, stakeholders felt it was important to offer ongoing education to support healthy lifestyle behaviors.

Partnerships with local libraries were identified as having the potential to impact many people. Each of the county community coordinators met with the librarians in their county and determined that this was a great opportunity to help provide new and updated information.

Librarians helped create a wish list of books or book topics related to health such as the Physician’s Desk Reference, cookbooks featuring healthy recipes, and health topics revealed by library members as relevant to their lives. A senior health educator researched books and put together a list meeting the needs of the libraries and fitting into the scope of the Strategic Alliance for Health objectives.

About 40 new books are now in circulation. The books cover these chronic disease areas:
- Diabetes and cardiovascular disease
- Healthy recipes
- Strength and fitness training
- Eating well
- Healthy pregnancies
- Flexibility and stretching
- Anatomy and the human body
- Smoking cessation

Selma-Dallas County Public Library Director Becky Nichols stated, “It is vital to offer this information to our residents in order to address lifestyle habits that are contributing to our chronic diseases.”

Leslie Knox, senior health educator with the Alabama Strategic Alliance for Health, said, “New books are for everyone from toddlers, adolescents, teenagers, young adults, adults and senior adults.”

Getting Healthy With a Good Book!
Libraries Increase Access to Health Information

Ready to get healthy?
Jump into a new book to get started!
Check out new books with a variety of health and wellness titles at the following libraries:

Selma-Dallas County Public Library
If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee's supervisor and a copy by e-mail to arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee's name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

Vernon Adkins
Danny Williams
Video Communications Division
from Sherry Bradley
Montgomery, Ala.

Mary Conway, R.N.
Teresa Young
PHA 8 Emergency Preparedness
from Eric Jones
Wetumpka, Ala.

Florine Croxton
Ted Johnson
Reginald Strickland
Center for Health Statistics
from Patsy B. Williams
Montgomery, Ala.

Wayne DuBose
Carolyn Thomas
Melanie Webster
Health Provider Standards
from Sherry Ginn
Phenix City, Ala.

Veronica Moore-Whitfield
Center for Health Statistics
from Karen Armsby
Dacula, Ga.

Amy Richards
Dale County Health Department
from Samuel Moore
Newton, Ala.

Delia Reynolds
Public Health Area 10
from Linda G. Harvey, L.B.S.W., M.S.
Dothan, Ala.

Reginald Strickland
Center for Health Statistics
from Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey
Montgomery, Ala.

Angelica Webb
Bureau of Clinical Laboratories
from Tim Hatch
Montgomery, Ala.

Anyone with symptoms of a heart attack is advised to call 9-1-1 immediately and rely on the trained paramedics who will provide pre-hospital treatment and transport the victim to a hospital. By arriving by ambulance, patients can also bypass the emergency room. Heart attack patients should not drive themselves to the hospital and should only be driven there by someone else if absolutely necessary.

Environmental Health Q and A

Homeowner expresses concern about attic insulation

QUESTION: We had insulation blown into our attic last year. I have tried contacting the contractor, but my calls have not been returned. We think there is something that is in the insulation that is causing respiratory stress with us and our pets. Where should we go to get some help?

ANSWER: You need to contact your local building code inspector to have an attic inspection. It seems your contractor may not have followed the building code and sprayed the insulation covering the attic ventilation openings. If you close the openings, the moisture in the attic builds up and mold can grow in the attic space and molds can cause your respiratory problems.

For your information, blown-in insulation materials usually do not cause respiratory problems since they do not migrate or float into your living space. If the mold is in the attic or you can smell musty smells, you need to remove all contaminated materials and clean up any surface growth. Depending on the seriousness of mold contamination, you may need to contact a mold remediation company. Your homeowners’ insurance may cover the remediation cost, depending on your policy.

To file a complaint, you can also contact the Better Business Bureau, the Alabama Contractor Licensing Board or the state Attorney General’s Office.

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Over the past few months, the State Office of Minority Health has hosted a series of forums to launch the National Partnership for Action Plan Strategy to reduce and eliminate health disparities in minority communities in Alabama.

The mission of the partnership is to increase the effectiveness of programs that target the elimination of health disparities through the coordination of partners, leaders and stakeholders who are committed to action. The partnership has served as a catalyst for collective leadership action around five main objectives: awareness, leadership, health system and life experience, cultural and linguistic competency, and research and evaluation.

The Office of Minority Health has utilized the partnership goals to raise awareness around Alabama health disparities and access-to-care issues in minority and underserved communities. Information was also shared on social determinants to health care including communication and language barriers with limited English speaking populations, sexual and gender identity issues, post-traumatic stress syndrome after an emergency, and the use of social media as a strategy for improving health communications.

The forums have served as a venue to disseminate information on the partnership goals and strategies to health care providers, community representatives, social service organizations and state agencies.

For more information on the National Partnership for Action Plan and Office of Minority Health initiatives to address health disparities in Alabama, please call (334)206-5396 or email omh@adph.state.al.us.
**Retirees**

**September**
- Rhonda Cofield  
  Public Health Area VI
- Frances Holder  
  Public Health Area I
- Michael Jarrett  
  Health Care Facilities
- Myra Johnston  
  DeKalb County Health Department
- Deborah Thomasson  
  Public Health Area XI

**Frances Walters**  
Coffee County Health Department
**Monika Wright**  
Public Health Area II

**October**
- Dolly Caldwell  
  Macon County Health Department
- Barbara Lindsey  
  Cullman County Health Department
- Peggy McDaniel  
  Greene County Health Department

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*Dr. Grace Thomas presents a retirement certificate to Brenda G. Davis, nurse coordinator with the Bureau of Family Health Services, who retired Oct. 1 after more than 33 years of service.*

*Office Manager Edith Billingslea of the Chambers County Health Department was honored with a retirement reception on Sept. 30. Ms. Billingslea retired after 37 years of service. Area 6 Assistant Administrator Mark Johnson presents her retirement certificate.*

*John W. Hicks, Jr., retired Oct. 1 from the Bureau of Environmental Services after more than 39 years of service. Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, presents his certificate.*

*Rosanna Smith retired Nov. 1 after nearly 35 years of service. Co-workers from the Cancer Prevention Program of the Bureau of Family Health Services honored her with a retirement reception on Oct. 17.*
Creativity Abounds at Pumpkin Carving and Costume Contests

Public health employees demonstrated their originality and style in the annual pumpkin decorating and costume contests at the RSA Tower in Montgomery. In the competition sponsored by the Office of Human Resources, entrants intricately carved, dressed, decorated and labeled their pumpkins. By popular vote as tallied by total contributions, the Most Popular pumpkin was “Here’s the Beef,” entered by Carol Heier, Bill Kennedy and Jeanetta Sheppard. In choosing their favorite pumpkin entry, contest voters donated more than $200 to benefit the State Combined Campaign. A panel of judges also selected “Here’s the Beef” as Best Decorated, and “Montgomery Biscuit” by Michelle Dickey as Best Carved.

At the RSA Park on Halloween, the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division provided precontest games. Then the costume contest began, and a panel of judges selected the following winners: Crystal Steen, “The Gnome;” Betsy Cagle, Michelle Dickey and Barry Riddle, “The Bachelor;” and Ann Dagostin, Wendy Dale, Mandy Darlington, Chris Haag, Debbie Moulton, Beth Nichols, Kitty Norris, Twila Pigg, Laurie Stout and Sharon Whalen, “Snow White and the Family Health Seven Dwarfs.”
By a strange coincidence, two Jackson County Health Department clinic employees were diagnosed with breast cancer on Sept. 15, 2010. Five months later, a third co-worker was found to have the disease. All three women underwent treatment while the disease was still in its early stages and are back on the job. As they have recovered, they are living examples of the importance of breast-self examination and mammography screening.

Through their struggles and triumphs in recent months, the women credit their co-workers for their continued support. None of the three had thought they were at increased risk for breast cancer because of family history, so they have become wonderful examples for health department patients who might consider procrastinating about screening.

Last September Ashly Williams found a lump in her breast, and within a few days saw her physician who ordered mammograms and ultrasounds. Her radiologist showed her the star-shaped lump in her breast and performed a biopsy which indicated a malignancy. After being presented several options, Ms. Williams opted to have a double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery.

“They were really great,” the nurse said of the Cancer Center in Huntsville. “They said it was 100 percent my decision, and I thought this choice would minimize the chance of cancer returning.”

As the 31-year-old mother of three, Ms. Williams had to explain to her children what was going to happen, and she said her 6-, 7- and 11-year-olds did very well from the beginning and have been very supportive of her throughout. While her surgery lasted seven and one-half hours, she was pleased that the procedure was not as painful as she had expected.

The second survivor, Alice Mitchell, age 50, had been planning a trip to Disney World with her family when she had a routine screening mammogram as she had done for many years. The mammogram showed some small spots which were biopsied for calcifications. The calcifications were so deep back on her chest wall that they couldn’t be felt by breast self examination. Her diagnosis of cancer was received on the same day as Ms. Williams’.

“Cancer was already into my lymph nodes, so I had a lumpectomy and 18 weeks of chemotherapy,” Ms. Mitchell said. As she recovers, she will continue taking herceptin for one year. When she had a mammogram last week, she was pleased that all appeared fine, and she and her family set off on their long-awaited holiday trip to Disney World.

The third survivor, Shay (Gwendolyn) McGill, kept her faith first after she discovered a small lump in her breast. Her cancer diagnosis, which occurred when she was 47, came five months after Ms. Williams’ and Ms. Mitchell’s. After surgery she underwent chemotherapy and now takes a hormone reducer daily. She advises other women whose breasts may be dense to be persistent if they feel anything they suspect may be a lump. Once it was removed, the lump in her breast was twice its expected size.

During their chemotherapy and resulting hair loss, the three employees wore scrub hats, caps or scarves instead of wigs.

One patient inquired at Ms. McGill’s desk if the three wore the head gear and later their short hair for breast cancer awareness. She replied, “No, we had breast cancer, the three of us. It was the real thing.”

A member of the Holiness church, a Christian faith which does not believe in women cutting their hair, Ms. McGill said acquaintances around town praised her “haircut.” She explained to them that her new appearance was because she had lost her hair to chemotherapy.

Ms. McGill said, “The Lord really helped me and sent a message to me. I had to learn what that faith is and I have to have a good attitude to magnify God and not cancer through all of this. Everyone has to do what’s right for them.”

continued page 12
Holiday Safety Tips

Never leave stoves, fireplaces, space heaters or candles unattended.

Do not burn gift wrapping paper in the fireplace. This can cause a flash fire.

Do not block your fire escape routes with trees or other holiday decorations.

Check smoke alarms before you begin decorating. Install carbon monoxide detectors on each level of your home.

Use a sturdy ladder when decorating trees or outdoors; never stand on a chair or furniture.

Avoid putting small “mouth-sized” decorations and lights where they can be easily reached by children or pets.

Alcohol, liquid in bubble lights and fake snow can be poisonous to children.

Leaving a box by the curb can let potential burglars know what new items you have in your home. Break down boxes and put them in the trash.

Do not change voicemail or announce on social media that you will be leaving town.
‘Just Screen Em’ A Winner

The Marshall County Health Department team, “Just Screen ‘Em,” participated in the Second Annual Pink Pumpkin 5K Run/Walk on Oct. 29. This event is sponsored by the Marshall Medical Center Foundation to support the Mammogram Assistance Program. The Health Department had 21 employees, friends and family register for the Pink Pumpkin Run, and 16 team members participate on race day. The Health Department team won first place in the team name category.

‘Pink Out CHS’ Luncheon Held

The Record Services Division of the Center for Health Statistics showed its support of breast cancer research, remembered those who have passed away, and rejoiced with those who have been diagnosed and survived the disease. To show their support, division employees dressed in denim and wore pink Breast Cancer Month T-shirts. The office was decorated with “Pinky” pink peonies and roses covered the tables. In the photograph, from left to right, are Record Services Director Nicole Henderson, Shenika Sellers Scott, Betty Thomas, Charlese Wright, State Registrar Cathy Molchan, Veronica Moore-Whitfield, Joy Williams, Tanya Haynes, Jody Mitchell and Glenda Adams. Not pictured are Yalisa Whatley, Tamekia Lewis and Deputy Director of Record Services Annette Johnson Bell.

Beauty and the Beast Fund Honors Elaine Goodman

Elaine Goodman covers 12 counties within Public Health Areas 2, 5 and 6 working with the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. She was asked to attend the Beauty and the Beast banquet on Oct. 21 to raise money for the organization.

“Little did Elaine know as she joined in the festivities she would be honored for all her hard work, the tons of paperwork involved and for helping women get enrolled in Medicaid,” co-worker Krystal Casey said.

The Beauty and the Beast fund was established in 2008 after several individuals realized the importance of helping breast cancer patients in Jackson County. The “Beauty” is the person honored and the “Beast,” of course, is the horrible symbol of breast cancer. The organization’s ultimate goal is to lend financial support to individuals for breast cancer only. It is a nonprofit organization serving women and men in Jackson County.

Inspiration, continued from page 10

The three survivors praised the support of their public health co-workers for filling in the gaps for them during their absences. The nurse and two clerical staff members are among just 12 employees working in the clinic. When the women finished their chemo in August, the Jackson County Health Department staff held a survivor’s luncheon for them.

“All of them were very helpful, understanding and patient,” Ms. Mitchell said of her colleagues.

A positive outcome is that as a result of their experiences, breast cancer awareness has been heightened. “Everyone here is a lot more aware of the importance of self breast checks, from WIC moms to Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program patients,” Ms. Williams said.
DeKalb County Activities Further Breast Cancer Awareness

In observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the staff at the DeKalb County Health Department wanted to show its support in the battle against breast cancer. Clinic supervisor Michelle Marlow designed custom T-shirts, stating: “We the people unite in the Breast Cancer Fight.” Employees were able to purchase a shirt to wear on Fridays during the month of October. “We know so many are impacted by breast cancer each year, whether themselves, a family member or friend, so we planted a Tree of Hope in the front lobby,” Office Manager Krystal Casey said. Employees as well as patients were encouraged to hang a pink ribbon on the tree and write in memory of or in honor of someone they knew who had battled breast cancer.

In addition to sporting T-shirts and decorating the Tree of Hope, staff members hung a large pink bow on the front door and hoisted a banner that read, “We Support Breast Cancer Awareness Month,” to show to all those who entered the DeKalb County Health Department. A celebration also was held to recognize those women who have fought the fight against breast cancer.

New Format Provided For Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Training

Studies have shown that Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs help to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among WIC participants. There are currently 27 peer counseling sites across the state, and plans are in place to continue expanding to additional sites.

All peer counselors are required to complete standard formal training after they are hired.

Peer counselors are WIC participants who previously breastfed or are currently breastfeeding their infant. The peer counselors provide basic breastfeeding information and support to pregnant or breastfeeding mothers that participate in the WIC Program.

In October, Michell Grainger and Alexis Aday, the department’s State Lactation Coordinator and the State Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator respectively, attended a United States Department of Agriculture management training and train-the-trainer event sponsored by the U.S.D.A. Southeast Regional Office.

The training, “Loving Support Through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together,” provides a new format for presenting the peer counselor training material. The new design appeals to one’s emotions, resulting in improved memory and recall of the information presented.

The WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program looks forward to the opportunities the new training format provides and the continued expansion of the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program.

For more information, contact State Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator Alexis Aday at (334) 206-2952.

By Alexis Aday
ADPH Road Warriors Step Out in Tuscaloosa

Employees of Public Health Area 3 participated in the 5K Step Out Walk for Diabetes, held in Tuscaloosa on Sept. 10. The team name was the ADPH Road Warriors and was comprised of Tuscaloosa County Home Health nurses, Life Care nurses, E/D Waiver social workers, area educators, and their families and friends.

“We wanted to participate in this walk because being public health employees, we see Alabamians affected by diabetes on a daily basis. We wanted to do our part and help with the fundraising efforts of the American Diabetes Association. This walk was the first for all of us and we all completed it.”

As a result of participating in the walk, several team members realized the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and the importance of routine exercise. They continue to walk three to four times per week in order to stay in shape.

“So we not only helped the American Diabetes Association, we also helped ourselves,” Mary Sewell, Home Health supervisor, said. “As team captain, I was really proud of my team.”

The team had only about one month to collect donations, but the Road Warriors raised more than $1,500 for the American Diabetes Association. They thanked everyone who participated in the fundraising and the walk; Tammy Yager, Area 3 Administrator; and Angela Buchanan, Area 3 Director; for their support.

Ms. Sewell said, “We had a wonderful time, we looked good and we represented ADPH. We all finished the walk. Yes, I have to admit, the HILL, which Debbie Hobbs, Area 3 business manager renamed ‘Mount Everest,’ almost made us have second thoughts, but we were true Road Warriors and we pressed on! The weather was beautiful and there were lots of people there.”

It was reported that there were over 350 registered walkers. Seven team members raised over $100: Valerie Wilson, E/D waiver social worker; Janene Woods, Home Health LPN: Lana Somers, Home Health RN; Debbie Hobbs, Area 3 Business Manager; Bernice Witherspoon, Home Health Contract RN; Marsha Burroughs, Home Health Supervisor; and Ms. Sewell. Ms. Wilson raised the largest amount, approximately $330. Janene Woods ran a close second with $200.

Several employee were “virtual” walkers: Juanna Acker, Debra Bell, Lashundra Bias, Angela Buchanan, Marsha Burroughs, Mandy Dockery, Tammy Foster, Sharon Hawkins, Angela Pullins, Sally Shipman and Alma Tutwiler.

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T-shirts for participants commemorated the April 27 tornadoes and recovery.
Responders Receive Radiation Response Incident Training

Emergency responders from throughout the state participated in radiation response incident training in Montgomery on Oct. 27. The Office of Radiation Control appreciates the support provided by county and area health administrators and employees statewide for this important program to safeguard the health of Alabama communities.

Butler County Health Department Presented Men’s Health Award

Health departments throughout Alabama observed Men’s Health Month during June by conducting health education and outreach activities. Social Work Director Maury West presented Public Health Area 9 Administrator Ricky Elliott the first Men’s Health Award, and he in turn presented the plaque to the Butler County staff at an Oct. 18 staff meeting.

“Hope Steadham did a great job coordinating activities in PHA 9 to promote National Men’s Health Month, as did Betty Dawson and the staff of the Butler County Health Department,” Elliott said.

Six of the eight counties in the area conducted several different activities. Tray liners promoting men’s health were distributed by Hardee’s, and the restaurant also provided free turkey burgers. Butler County Health Department, in partnership with Urology Centers of Alabama, conducted a free prostate cancer clinic where 91 men were screened.

Elliott said, “I am very excited and proud of Butler County for winning the inaugural Men’s Health Award, and I am appreciative of the response and participation from PHA 9 staff in promoting men’s health. Although awards are fun and exciting to receive, the real winners are the men who heard the message and took steps to improve their health. Public health is all about prevention. Promoting National Men’s Health Month is just one facet of the many educational preventive measures that the department performs. I am excited to see the ADPH taking the lead in this effort.”
Parents Advised to Have their Homes and Children Tested for Lead

Nearly a quarter of a million children living in the United States have blood lead levels high enough to cause significant damage to their health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates, based on data from a 2003–2004 national survey. Major sources of lead exposure among U.S. children are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust found in deteriorating buildings.

Despite the continued presence of lead in the environment, lead poisoning is entirely preventable. “If high blood lead levels are not detected early, children with such high levels of lead in their bodies can suffer from damage to the brain and nervous system,” Dr. Tom Miller, deputy director for medical affairs, said. "They can also develop behavior and learning problems (such as hyperactivity), slowed growth, hearing problems, and aggressive patterns of behavior.”

Parents can reduce a child’s exposure to lead in many ways. Here are some simple steps to help protect your family:

- Get your home tested. Before you buy an older home, ask for a lead inspection.
- Get your child tested. Even if your young children seem healthy, ask your doctor to test them for lead.
- Get the facts! Local health departments can provide helpful information about preventing childhood lead poisoning.

According to Jacquline Harris, director, Alabama Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, all children should be tested for lead poisoning at 12 and 24 months of age as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. For more information, call Ms. Harris at (334) 206-2966 or toll free at 1-800-545-1098.

‘Spice’ or ‘K2’ Removed from Alabama Store Shelves

Brandon Murphy’s family shared the story of his life to warn others of the dangers of a synthetic hallucinogen substance known by the street names of “Spice” or “K2” in an effort to make changes in the law. An honors student, Brandon had been awarded a full college scholarship and aspired to become a doctor. But after he and a friend had been smoking “Spice,” just two to three hours later he took his own life. An empty package of the legally obtained substance along with a receipt were found in his car after his death.

The department heard testimony about this hallucinogen at a public hearing on Sept. 19. The psychoactive herbal and chemical substances were sold in a variety of stores and marketed online as herbal incense or potpourri. Law enforcement officers, members of the medical community and others provided information about the abuses, risks and adverse events associated with its use.

Following the hearing and with the support of the State Committee of Public Health, State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson signed an emergency order making the possession or sale of chemical compounds typically found in synthetic marijuana substances unlawful. The substances were placed under Schedule I of the Alabama Controlled Substances List and authorization was made to begin the required public comment process to amend Schedule I of the Controlled Substances List. The Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board ordered it removed from store shelves and has seized millions of dollars worth of the product.
Dr. Grace Thomas Remains Highly Engaged As She Accepts Additional Responsibilities

As newly appointed Assistant State Health Officer for Family Health Services, Dr. Grace Thomas is highly qualified both in depth of knowledge and wealth of experience as an obstetrician/gynecologist. In her nearly seven years with the department, colleagues at every level have grown to know and respect her as a leader.

Deputy Director for Medical Affairs, Dr. Tom Miller, praised her skills, attitude and work ethic. “Dr. Thomas has wholeheartedly embraced public health’s unique mission,” he said. “She has worked tirelessly to ensure quality in the agency’s clinical services to women. With her new duties, she has demonstrated an eagerness to learn about other programs both within and outside Family Health. She is a valuable colleague with a bright future in public health.”

Chris Haag, deputy director of the Bureau of Family Health Services, joined in agreement. He said, “Dr. Thomas has a great rapport with our staff here and is well respected by employees at the county and area levels. She is doing a fantastic job.”

Soon after beginning her employment with the department in May 2005, Dr. Thomas’ first position was as medical director of women’s health and her primary responsibility was to establish a model clinic for public health nurse practitioners statewide and to serve as their collaborating physician.

At the model clinic located at the Montgomery County Health Department, she trains recently hired nurse practitioners and assesses the skills of seasoned nurse practitioners in 12- to 18-month rotations. All nurse practitioners receive assessments of their competency and clinical skills at least once each year. This is intended to standardize the care patients receive across the state for better patient care.

In visiting the clinic, it is apparent that warmth, cordiality, confidentiality and assurance that the patient is comfortable communicating with the staff are valued and are essential in ensuring that patients receive optimal care.

On a typical January day at the clinic, Dr. Thomas recalled seeing two patients for whom more than just family planning assistance was provided. A woman speaks with a nurse practitioner and describes her symptoms. She was especially distraught because she had recently lost her mother to ovarian cancer. Concern and open discussion clears the air so that in further conversation, the patient reveals that she is a victim of domestic violence and a referral was arranged. Similarly, a middle-aged woman who had received her most recent Pap smear three years earlier, was informed she had cervical cancer and had failed to receive appropriate follow-up. Before the patient left the clinic, staff arranged for treatment and hospitalization.

“It can be overwhelmingly emotional,” Dr. Thomas said. “If the patient and the nurse practitioner had not gotten past a cursory discussion on a superficial level, we could
Video Conferencing Capability Available

All public health area offices, the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories and several RSA Tower conference rooms will soon have new capability for meetings - multipoint video conferencing. Video conferencing technology includes a camera, microphone, and a special monitor so participants can talk and see each other, share PowerPoint slides and other computer resources.

The Video Communications and Distance Learning staff has worked with the department’s Information Technology staff to plan for and deploy the network. By the end of February, about 12 of the 18 units will be operational at public health area offices, the state lab and the central office.

“This conferencing system is a valuable meeting and learning tool and is a huge benefit for the department because meetings can be facilitated efficiently and cost effectively,” said Sandra Blakely, video conference coordinator for the division. Beginning in March, staff will be able to schedule video conference meetings. For more information, go to the Video Conferencing link on the division’s website, www.adph.org/alphtn.

Resurgence of Bedbugs: Nuisance Insects Bug Alabamians

The Alabama Department of Public Health has begun to receive complaints about bedbugs in public lodging facilities. Bedbugs are a nuisance insect and are not known to transmit disease. However, bedbug bites can result in itchy skin. Most of the bites are painless at first, but then turn into itchy welts. The bites may be assumed to be from other insects such as mosquitoes. To confirm bedbug bites, you will have to find and identify the bugs themselves.

Experts suspect the resurgence is associated with more international and domestic travel, lack of knowledge necessary to prevent infestations, increased resistance of bed bugs to pesticides, and ineffective pest control practices.

Preventing bedbug infestations when traveling:

- In hotel rooms, use luggage racks to hold your luggage when packing or unpacking rather than setting your luggage on the bed or floor.
- Check the mattress and headboard before sleeping.

If you should have bedbugs in your home:

Bedbugs are hitchhikers, using furniture, bedding, boxes, luggage, and clothing to move from site to site. Their presence does not imply insanitary conditions in the home. The best source of treatment is to call a licensed pest control company.

ADPH actions:
When complaints are received concerning permitted lodging facilities, ADPH public health environmentalists will investigate the facilities. If bedbugs are found, the lodging area will be closed until properly treated and the bedbugs are eliminated.

More information on bedbugs is available online from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at http://www.epa.gov/bedbugs/.

Alabama’s Health

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Noelle Ahmann .......................................................... Graphic Designer
Dr. Thomas, continued from page 1
not have pointed her in the right direction for her best overall care.”

While she cannot devote herself fully to her new position as assistant state health officer until a new medical director can be employed, her tenure in the Bureau of Family Health Services has prepared her well for the management and human resource issues she will undertake.

“Public health has been an eye opener for me,” she said. “People think of immunizations with public health, but then there are the concerns about bacterial levels of oyster beds, monitoring septic tanks, and the vast role that public health plays in our lives. This has been a very positive experience—having a great mentor in (Dr.) Tom Miller and being surrounded by a solid core of hardworking folks who are very dedicated to public health.”

Dr. Thomas is optimistic about the future of public health and its ever-evolving role. She said, “We must keep abreast of what’s new and what’s on the horizon in family health.”

“Fortunately, all of the divisions of the bureau are well run,” she said. “The directors have helped me as I have gone along. Our nurse practitioners do a great job of family planning and cancer detection across the state for the neediest women, and we could not do the job we do without our social workers and administrative staff.”

Before coming to the department, Dr. Thomas practiced privately in New York and practiced at St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Hospital in New York City where she also directed a colposcopy clinic and provided prenatal care at substance abuse and HIV clinics. A graduate of New York Medical College, she is a Fellow of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and a member of the American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology.

When she’s not on the job or traveling for Family Health, she wears yet another hat as mother. She and her surgeon husband, Dr. John Tinglin, are the parents of two teenage daughters: one is a ninth grader and the other is a college-bound senior.

Etowah County Case Managers Deliver Gifts to E/D Waiver Clients

The Elderly/Disabled Waiver Social Work staff in Etowah County went above and beyond for waiver clients in need of some cheer. The case managers delivered Christmas gifts (pictured at right) to 60 of their waiver clients during this holiday season. This was made possible through donations from Crosspoint Community Church in Gadsden. The case managers reviewed closely the clients who appeared in most need of assistance, and asked them to create a wish list for the church Angel Tree. This effort was initiated by Valerie Harp, E/D Waiver case manager in Etowah County. Valerie attends Crosspoint Church. The church took the client’s wish list and bought everything requested. The case managers delivered the gifts the week of Christmas to all 60 clients. The clients were extremely grateful for the gifts and the case managers enjoyed playing Santa. Some of the items requested were a book of stamps to help pay bills, a tube of denture paste, underwear, and gowns. The social workers are pictured (left to right): Suzanne Hammock, Kimberly Richard, Christi Norton, Angela Ashley, Stephanie Williams and Valerie Harp.

Shown (left to right) at the Model Clinic at Montgomery County Health Department are Ramona Hawkins, C.R.N.P.; Cravens Gibbs, C.R.N.P., of Public Health Area 2; Grace Thomas, M.D., and Latoya Davis, C.R.N.P., of Public Health Area 3.
First AL-SIP Focuses on Assessing Alabama’s Laboratory System

A broad group of stakeholders from throughout the state convened to participate in the first Alabama Public Health Laboratory System Performance Assessment (AL-SIP) Jan. 31 in Montgomery. This day-long assessment was intended to identify how well the state system functions in addressing laboratory issues. Approximately 90 persons participated in the day-long assessment.

Sharon Massingale, Ph.D., Bureau of Clinical Laboratories director, stated in introducing this assessment, “It’s an ongoing challenge to build a better lab, and it is important to recognize that Alabama’s public health laboratory system includes all of the organizations and partners that contribute to the state’s ability to meet state laboratory needs for assuring health and well-being. This system assessment will give us information on where we are successful, highlight areas of progress and identify places where improvements need to be made.”

The assessment was conducted using the State Public Health Laboratory System Performance Measurement Tool developed by the Association of Public Health Laboratories and based on an instrument developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Public Health Performance Standards Program.

Materials were provided to participants in advance of the AL-SIP. In addition to many Alabama Department of Public Health participants from a range of disciplines and areas, organizations represented included the CDC, several Alabama universities, several hospitals, military representatives, many state agencies, many federal agencies and other stakeholders including the laboratory’s specimen courier service.

Through group meetings and a facilitation process, a consensus was reached and collated into a statewide response. Serving as facilitators were Jamey Durham, director of the Bureau of Professional and Support Services; and retired department employees Frances Kennamer and Shelia Puckett, formerly of the Bureau of Professional and Support Services. Assisting them in capturing the themes expressed as main ideas and “parking lot” issues were laboratorians Traci Dailey, Tracy Graham, Stacey Hall, Inga Jackson, Russell Majors, Drew Sheehan, and Nick Switzer.

Providing special assistance for the AL-SIP were bureau employees Assistant Laboratory Director Dr. Michael Davis, Jane Duke, Courtney Jones, Braden Pace, Charlene Thomas, Aretha Williams, Craig Wilson and Marian Woodman.

A formal summary will be prepared to identify strengths and areas for improvement; however, key indicators expressed at the 2012 AL-SIP found the Alabama laboratory system is accessible, collaborates well with partners and has an exceptional staff.

“We are all interdependent in making the public health system work, and it will be an ongoing process to develop a plan for improvement and evaluate and reassess the plan,” Dr. Massingale said.

The theme takers are (left to right) Russell Majors, Tracy Graham, Stacey Hall, Nicholas Switzer, Drew Sheehan, Traci Dailey and Inga Jackson.

Stakeholders and partners from throughout Alabama participated.
The Alabama Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition recently presented its 2011-2015 cancer control plan at the Bioethics Conference on Cancer Health Disparities Research held at the Tuskegee University Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in Tuskegee. With the goal of reducing the rates of cancer in Alabama, the five-year plan includes fundamental lifestyle changes such as elimination of tobacco use, increased emphasis on physical activity and proper nutrition, participation in cancer screenings and vaccination, and appropriate and timely treatment.

This, the third five-year plan to be released by the Coalition, includes new emphasis on a wide range of cancer-related topics such as new data regarding the average age at diagnosis of cancer in Alabama, the danger of tanning beds as carcinogens, patient navigation, the need for guidelines for follow-up care for cancer patients, the importance of the HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer, and the implementation of genomics.

The plan uses new data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2009 survey that shows approximately 13 percent of Alabamians have been diagnosed with at least one form of cancer. Two-thirds of those diagnosed with cancer in Alabama were 60 years of age or younger and only 12.5 percent of the survivors were diagnosed after age 70. “These data are striking as so many of us think of cancer as being an old person’s affliction,” said Kathryn Chapman, Cancer Prevention Program director. These data support the importance of timely screenings. For example, the recommended screening age for breast and colorectal cancer is 50 for average risk individuals while the recommended screening age for cervical cancer, however, begins at 21.

The plan also emphasizes the growing need for state regulations of tanning beds and calls for limiting teenagers’ access as well as the warning of consumers that tanning beds are a class 1 carcinogen, like cigarettes and formaldehyde. The risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, is increased by 75 percent in people who use tanning beds regularly.

Another new topic of interest in the new plan is patient navigation. There is a growing need in Alabama to ensure that cancer patients have access to quality treatment through appropriate protocol and referral systems. Also, due to the growing number of people surviving cancer, the plan calls for guidelines for directing the care of survivors, particularly survivors of childhood cancers.

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is also one of the new plan’s points of interest. Since the introduction of the vaccine in June of 2006, Alabama’s vaccination rates have lagged behind the national rate. In this new plan, the Coalition stresses the present need for effective collaboration to understand barriers and to educate physicians and families about the relationship between the virus and cervical cancer. The vaccine is recommended for women between the ages of 11 and 26.

Genomics is an emerging field that plays a vital role in cancer research and treatment. By identifying gene mutations that may be passed from generation to generation, doctors can let family members know who should be screened for cancer more frequently or at a younger age. Currently there is insufficient evidence to recommend genetic risk counseling; with newer testing methods and lower costs, genomics will be continually expanding. Additional education for physicians about pharmacogenomics may foster broader adoption of genetic testing. This further knowledge will help physicians to target specific gene mutations and treat them appropriately.

The Coalition also continues to be committed to furthering the goals continued page 7
Cases of the contagious viral illness called hand, foot and mouth disease are more numerous and severe than normal in Alabama this winter. No known deaths have resulted from the virus, although there have been hospitalizations and there can be some rare, severe complications.

The department has interviewed patients and collected and submitted specimens to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for individuals with febrile illnesses and rash. Based on the results of testing done by the CDC, the Coxsackie A6 virus has been identified. This specific type of virus has been identified in other countries but has not previously been associated with an outbreak in the U.S. There is no specific treatment for hand, foot and mouth disease.

“As this is a new virus for our population, we can expect more cases and are monitoring for any change in the clinical presentation,” Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said. “We will continue statewide surveillance on severe cases of this emerging disease and ask physicians and infection control specialists to make notifications to us.”

The public should not be unduly alarmed at this time; however, individuals diagnosed with hand, foot and mouth disease need to follow the recommendations of their health care provider to remain at home until they have no fever, all lesions have scabbed over, and no lesions have appeared for two days. The viral disease affects the hands, feet and mouth and usually infects infants and children younger than 5 years old in summer and early autumn. There is no vaccine to protect against it, but learning about the disease and following these recommendations can reduce the risk of illness.

Hand, foot and mouth disease spreads:
- Person-to-person: Direct contact with saliva, sputum or nasal mucus from the infected person’s nose and throat or with fluid in blisters, or with stool.
- Surface-to-person: Touching objects and surfaces touched by infected persons.
- Infected persons are most contagious during the first week of the illness, but can still pass the virus for weeks after symptoms have gone away.

These are the symptoms:
- Fever, rash, sores, poor appetite, a vague feeling of illness and sore throat.
- Painful sores in the mouth may blister and become ulcers.
- Skin rash, flat or raised red spots, develops over 1 to 2 days.
- Rash usually on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet and may appear on the knees, elbows, bottom or genital area.
- Dehydration may occur because of painful mouth sores.

Recommendations to protect yourself and prevent its spread:
- Wash hands with soap and water carefully and frequently, especially after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers, and before preparing foods or beverages.
- Disinfect surfaces and items, including toys. First wash the items with soap and water; then disinfect them with a solution of 1 tablespoon of bleach and 4 cups of water.
- Avoid close contact such as kissing, hugging or sharing eating utensils or cups with infected people.

Cases of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease Become More Numerous and Severe

Commendations

If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee’s supervisor and a copy by e-mail to arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee’s name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

Glenda Adams
Center for Health Statistics
from Cheryl Lane
Atlanta, Ga.

Linda Bolding
Center for Health Statistics
from Adell Mingo
Mobile, Ala.

Virginia Jackson, R.N.
Dallas County Health Department
from Eddie O. Ward
Selma, Ala.

Pam Milam
Hale County Health Department
from Connie K. Avery, R.N.
Greensboro, Ala.

Al Stone
Center for Health Statistics
from Jenna Green
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Video Communications and Distance Learning Division
Health Promotion and Chronic Disease
from Division of Preventive Medicine
University of Alabama at Birmingham
Scale Back Alabama Begins Sixth Year

Scale Back Alabama, the weight-loss contest designed to help Alabamians fight obesity and to encourage participants to engage in healthy lifestyle behaviors, began its sixth annual competition Jan. 19. The department and the Alabama Hospital Association are sponsors, along with support from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama.

Gov. Robert Bentley views his weight on a set of electronic scales as Miriam Gaines and Whitney Pinkston (left to right) of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division join his fellow team members Revenue Commissioner Julie Magee and Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey in looking on. The governor plans to incorporate smarter eating decisions into his daily life. State Health Officer Dr. Don Williamson also is a member of his team.

Ready to kick off their participation in the sixth year of Scale Back Alabama are (left to right) Florine Croxton, Sandra Blakely, Bronett Terrell, Casandra Henderson and Dr. Debra Hodges. They are members of the “Dream’n Girls” and “Pound Crushers” teams.

ACCCC, continued from page 5

and objectives set in the previous versions of the plan as well as monitoring the progress of these goals.

The ACCCC would like to recognize the following people for their efforts in writing, editing, formatting and producing the 2010-2015 cancer control plan: Cancer Prevention Program staff Erica Anderson, Kathryn Chapman, Blu Gilliland, Emily Stewart, Scott Thomas and Tamekie Washington and Coalition members and University of Alabama at Birmingham professors and staff Renee Desmond, Allison Litton, Ph.D., John Waterbor, M.D., M.S., Dr.P.H., and Laura Gallitz. The Coalition would also like to thank Reid/O’Donahue Advertising, Inc., who provided the layout and formatting for the plan.

By Bret Stanfield
Retirees

**November**
Delois Baxter  
Finance  
Shirley Henley  
Facilities Management  
Joyce Johnson  
Public Health Area V  
Major Johnson  
Greene County Health Department  
Deborah Kilgo  
Public Health Area IX  
Sarah McCurry  
Russell County Health Department  
Hal Moore  
HIV/AIDS Division  
Lillian Parton  
Talladega County Health Department  
Cheryl Urquhart  
Finance  

**December**
Glen Cochran  
Cherokee County Health Department  
Linda Cureton  
Public Health Area IV  
Marjorie Daniel  
Randolph County Health Department  
Antonia Evans  
Lauderdale County Health Department  
Kathy Green  
Randolph County Health Department  
Gloria Henderson  
Logistics  
Jeanette Johnson  
Public Health Area VII  
Nydia Kornschtuz  
Facilities Management  
Valerie Lamb  
Clinical Laboratory  
Jane Lee  
Public Health Area IV  
Deborah Long  
Fayette County Health Department  
Ethel Lowery  
Chilton County Health Department  
Pamela Newman  
Dale County Health Department  
Melanie Prins  
Russell County Health Department  
Joyce Roberts  
Public Health Area V  
Sonja Rogers  
Lauderdale County Health Department  
Amelia Scarbrough  
Baldwin County Health Department  
Donna Shelton  
Limestone County Health Department  
Bethany Smith  
Marshall County Health Department  
Patricia Steadham  
Wilcox County Health Department  
Judy Till  
Immunization  
Lyne Taylor  
Public Health Area IV  
Betty Thomas  
Health Statistics  
Sharon Tullos  
HIV/AIDS  
Ruth Turner  
Children’s Health Insurance Program  
Joyce Weddington  
Public Health Area I  

**January**
Yolanda Gantt  
Escambia County Health Department  
Evalee Hallmark  
Public Health Area I  
Helen Holcomb  
Talladega County Health Department  
William Lovett  
Information Technology  
June Middlebrooks  
Coosa County Health Department  
Margaret Parnell  
Washington County Health Department  
Roy Riley  
Health Care Facilities  
Peggy Roberts  
Mobile Lab  
Martha Smith  
Talladega County Health Department  
Sharon Thompson  
Epidemiology  

Deputy Director for Program Operations Michele Jones bids farewell to Charles Graves, Ed.D., at a reception Dec. 14 in Montgomery. He retired from the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health where he managed National Health Service Corps placements.

Debbie Patterson retired Dec. 1 from a public health career that spanned more than three decades and included service with three bureaus, concluding with the Bureau of Information Technology.
The Alabama Department of Public Health recognizes Regional Medical Center in Anniston as the first hospital in the state to receive recognition from Baby-Friendly USA for providing optimal breastfeeding care. Dr. Lewis Doggett, a pediatrician at RMC, said improving breastfeeding rates is important because the practice can improve the health of children. Dr. Doggett said, “The Ten Steps are not arbitrary, but are evidence-based. They have been proven to improve breastfeeding rates when instituted.”

“Breastfed babies are much healthier than formula fed babies,” Dr. Doggett said. “This will not only have a dramatic impact on their individual health with fewer ear infections, respiratory infections, diarrhea, asthma, obesity, and many more, but also will impact the health care system as a whole with fewer office visits, fewer hospitalizations, and fewer missed days of work by parents. The cost savings to the health care system will be significant. The growing body of scientific evidence for the benefits of breastfeeding is quite remarkable.”

Baby-Friendly USA is the U.S. authority for the implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, a global program sponsored by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund. The initiative encourages and recognizes hospitals and birthing centers that offer an optimal level of care for breastfeeding mothers and their babies.

The hospital had worked nearly seven years to achieve this recognition. According to Baby-Friendly USA’s website, there are more than 20,000 designated baby-friendly hospitals and birth centers worldwide and just 125 in the United States. RMC received this designation only after implementing 10 steps laid out by Baby-Friendly USA to support successful breastfeeding.

The Ten Steps include training all health care staff on a breastfeeding policy, helping mothers breastfeed within one hour of birth, and allowing mothers and infants to remain in the same room together 24 hours a day.

“This designation is rewarding because it has taken the time and dedication of the staff,” said Shelley Birchfield, nurse manager. “We are willing to work with other hospitals to develop policies to become Baby-Friendly.”

One of the action steps recommended in The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding is to ensure that maternity care practices are fully supportive of breastfeeding. For more information about Baby-Friendly visit http://www.babyfriendlyusa.org/

The Alabama Department of Public Health encourages all delivery hospitals in the state to achieve the Baby-Friendly designation. For questions about breastfeeding contact Michell Grainger, MSN, RNC, IBCLC, State Lactation Coordinator, WIC, (334) 206-2921.
Great things are happening in Selma to impact chronic disease by reducing risk factors, and we remain committed to leading the charge!” That’s what supporters of the Strategic Alliance for Health (SAH) believe after noting positive changes with regard to tobacco use in the Selma-Dallas County area.

The Dallas County Health Department served as a role model to the community with its recent policy change to make its campus tobacco free Sept. 1. These additional changes have been announced:

- Selma Medical Associates (a group of four local physicians in practice together) became tobacco free Jan. 1, 2012. The newly adopted written policy is a part of the practice’s personnel manual.

Prior to that date, the medical practice prohibited smoking within indoor areas only.

SAH delivered window clings to the medical practice last year for display in waiting areas, windows and doors, prohibiting smoking indoors. A comprehensive tobacco-free policy to include both indoor and outdoor areas at this medical practice is now in effect.

- Vaughan Regional Medical Center announced its plans to become a tobacco-free campus on Nov. 10, 2012. The announcement was made in The Selma Times-Journal Jan. 26. The hospital has created a steering committee with plans to educate employees about the new policy, the harmful effects of tobacco use and exposure, smoking cessation resources, as well as provide personal coaches to those in need of additional assistance to cease tobacco use.

SAH had some conversation with Barry Keel, hospital administrator, who along with Merrill South, the director of community relations, attended consortium meetings in Dallas County during which there was frequent dialogue about the risk factors associated with tobacco use and exposure.

“SoA is pleased to see the above initiatives become reality,” Ann Fuller, assistant community coordinator of SAH in Selma, said. “We believe our involvement with these two entities, in some measure, helped encourage and inspire their respective actions.”

Who would have guessed that a student in one of Baldwin County’s ServSafe classes would be so inspired that she would incorporate the curriculum into her class? Joni Ojard, the Family and Consumer Sciences teacher at Spanish Fort High School, was a student in one of the ServSafe classes taught by Nancy Harris, a public health environmentalist with Baldwin County Health Department.

Mrs. Ojard is required to teach parts of the ServSafe course in her home economics class and wanted her students to be able to take the test, so they would have the chance to obtain the food manager certification. The opportunity to have her students take the test required arranging a proctored test in Birmingham. Travel costs made it prohibitive for the students to attend.

So Mrs. Ojard contacted Mrs. Harris at the health department to see if she would serve as proctor for the test. She also invited Mrs. Harris to speak to both of her classes this semester. Mrs. Harris made a presentation on food safety and hygiene to two classes and will serve as a co-proctor for the testing of the students.

Mrs. Ojard has since become a certified instructor/proctor for ServSafe so that she can administer the tests in the future. Because the State of Alabama food regulations require at least one person at each food establishment to have either attended a ServSafe course or have a valid certificate from the same, the certificate is a bonus for her students seeking employment in the food service industry. Mrs. Harris has been asked by Mrs. Ojard to repeat her presentation and to proctor again in the coming spring semester. Nancy’s dedication to teaching ServSafe not only benefits the students who attend her classes, but will positively impact the health and well being of the community by providing a workforce of young people trained in the various aspects of food safety!

Community education and outreach remains the hallmark of public health in Baldwin County and in the state of Alabama.

“It is encouraging to see staff go above and beyond in their public health work to assure that we meet the needs of those in our communities,” Ricky Elliott, Public Health Area 9 administrator said. “Education is a perfect avenue for us to incorporate public health’s mission of prevention.”

By Bill Kelly
Distinguished Young Women of Alabama Learn about GAL

Drew Nelson of the Communications and Health Marketing Division presented GAL to the 51 county competition winners in the Distinguished Young Women of Alabama State Finals in Montgomery in January. GAL (Get a Healthy Life) was created to educate, enlighten, and inspire women to take time out for themselves and get healthy. Discussion centered on making their health a priority--whether it be physical fitness, watching what you eat, planning for your future, and preparing and planning for disasters. The high school seniors were very enthusiastic and asked whether they could do things in their communities to further program goals among their peers.

OMH honors Video Communications and Distance Learning

The Office of Minority Health presented a plaque to the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division in recognition and appreciation of the division’s ongoing support and technical assistance for the successful 2010-2011 Health Disparities Satellite Conference series. Shown, left to right, are Nick Moss, Ron Davis, Craig Young, Danny Williams, Vernon Adkins, Craig Young, Anna Marie Parrish; seated, Sandra Blakely and Michael Smith.

Test for Radon in the Winter

Do you know that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking, and the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers? The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon causes 21,000 lung cancer deaths per year. If you smoke and your home contains radon, your lung cancer risk is especially high.

You can’t see, smell or taste radon, but there is an easy and affordable way to test for radon in your home. The best time to test for radon gas is in the colder winter months when your home is closed and radon levels are likely to build to their highest concentrations.

High levels of indoor radon have been found in many areas of Alabama; however, radon appears to occur most frequently in homes across the Tennessee Valley and in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains from Jefferson and Shelby counties to Cleburne County. Because radon is a colorless, odorless gas that occurs naturally in soil and rocks through the breakdown of uranium, testing is the only way to know the radon level in a home.

Radon test kits weigh only a few ounces and typically cost about $15. Kits are available at many larger home improvement stores. As a public service, many local offices of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System also sell homeowners a kit to test their own homes at a wholesale price of $5.

Most people can easily complete the radon test on their homes themselves by following simple directions on the kit. It takes only a few days to obtain a sample. If test results are above the U.S. EPA’s national action level of 4.0 picoCuries of radon per liter of air, the Alabama Department of Public Health recommends homeowners install a radon remediation system.

The average cost of a radon remediation system is between $800 and $1,200, depending on the square footage of the residence and the difficulty in finding a suitable pathway for a radon removal pipe. The price may be more for some homes.

# Calendar of Events

## February 22
**Be One in a Million Hearts:** Addressing the #1 Killer of Alabamians, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.

## February 29
**Intimate Partner Violence:** 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Annie Vosel, (334) 206-2959.

## March 14
**Identifying Abuse and Neglect in Home Care:** 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 206-3867, or Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.

## March 21
**2012 STD Update (ADPH Nurse In-service):** 8-10 a.m.
For more information contact Marilyn Knight, (205) 562-6954, or Thresa Dix, (334) 206-3377.

## April 2-8
**National Public Health Week:** "A Healthier America Begins TODAY."
For more information visit www.nphw2012.org.

## April 5
**ADPH Statewide Staff meeting:** 3-4 p.m.
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

## April 10
**Strategies for Successful Integration of Immunization and Emergency Preparedness Programs in Planning and Practice:** noon-1:30 p.m.
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 206-3867, or Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.

## April 13
**Nuclear Power Plant Safety and the Public Health Response:** noon-1:30 p.m.
For more information contact Nancy Wooldridge, (205) 939-5498.

## April 25
**Arthritis Awareness.**
For more information contact Samille Jackson, (334) 206-5658.

## May 10-11
**Alabama Public Health Association 56th Annual Health Education Conference and Meeting:** Wynfrey Hotel, Riverchase Galleria, Hoover.
For more information visit alphasoc.org.

## May 23
**Home Health Program:** 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 206-3867, or Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.
Some have called the date of April 27, 2011, Alabama’s 9/11 because of the massive destruction and enormous loss of life experienced in a single day. A series of violent tornadoes killed more than 230 people, injured more than 1,500, and left a wave of horrific destruction and loss that will not easily be forgotten as the state recovers in the months and years to come.

Immediately following the storm, Children’s Hospital of Alabama reported it treated more injured children at one time than ever before. Other hospitals reported high numbers of trauma patients in addition to less severe injuries, but the health care system held strong.

The number of twisters, their severity and their geographic dispersion was unprecedented in Alabama. The National Weather Service estimates there were 62 tornadoes coursing through both small and large communities in the state. Some stayed on the ground for as far as 60 miles. According to the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, six EF-3 tornadoes, eight EF-4 tornadoes and two EF-5 tornadoes have been confirmed so far. As a result of this disastrous day’s events and earlier destructive storms during April, 43 of Alabama’s 67 counties have been declared federal disaster areas.

Some Alabama Department of Public Health employees sustained injuries and property losses, a number of family members of employees and patients perished, but no employees were killed and no health department structures were severely damaged. Power outages were experienced in large sections of the state, often for several days.

Early in the day of April 27 the ADPH external liaison began staffing the state emergency operations center in Clanton. Personnel were assigned responsibility for situation management, including monitoring the needs of hospitals and health care facilities statewide. Some Area 1 staff members were deployed to Russellville Hospital to assist with triage and treatment. The Video Communications Division assisted Gov. Robert Bentley by broadcasting news conferences by satellite.

Responding to the magnitude of the random tornadoes occurring in different parts of the state on the same day was a great challenge. For example, mortuary trailers had to be dispatched to different counties at the same time. In some areas, satellite phones and ham radios were the only means of communication for a time.

A departmental culture of responding to emergencies is such that employees understand that disaster response is a part of their jobs, and they want to do everything they can possibly do to help. Employees themselves do not see their actions as anything extraordinary.

These are some examples. Even though he resides in another county Sam LeMaster responded to his concerns about the condition and safety of the citizens of Marion County. Amy Baker,

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CDC Identifies 10 Public Health Achievements of First Decade of 21st Century

Hundreds of thousands of lives and billions of dollars saved, much more possible

The major public health achievements of the first 10 years of the 21st century included improvements in vaccine-preventable and infectious diseases, reductions in deaths from certain chronic diseases, declines in deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes, and more, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The 10 domestic public health achievements are published in the May 20 issue of CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).

One of the major findings in the report is that the United States has saved billions of dollars in health care costs as a result of these achievements. For instance, fortifying our foods with folic acid has resulted in a savings of over $4.6 billion over the past decade, by reducing neural tube defects in children. Continued investments will save more. For example, ensuring that all children are vaccinated with the current schedule could result in a savings of $20 billion in health care costs over the lifetime of those children. Preventing motor vehicle crashes could save $99 billion in medical and lost work costs annually and the economic benefit of lowering lead levels among children by preventing lead exposure is estimated at $213 billion per year.

“Americans are living longer, healthier, and more productive lives than ever before thanks in part to extraordinary achievements in public health over the past decade,” said CDC Director Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. “However, we can do much more to protect and promote health. Continued investments in prevention will help us and our children live even longer, healthier and more productive lives while bringing down health care costs.”

The accomplishments include:

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
A number of new vaccines were introduced during the first decade of the 21st century. Two of the most significant were the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, which has prevented an estimated 211,000 serious pneumococcal infections and 13,000 deaths and the rotavirus vaccine, which now prevents an estimated 40,000-60,000 rotavirus hospitalizations each year. Other achievements included record low reported cases of hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and chicken pox. A recent economic analysis indicates that vaccinating each child born in the United States in a given year with the current childhood immunization schedule could prevent approximately 42,000 deaths and 20 million cases of disease.

Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases
The first decade of the 21st century saw a 30 percent reduction in reported tuberculosis cases in the United States and a 58 percent decline in central line-associated bloodstream infections. A central line is a tube that a doctor usually places in a large vein of a patient’s neck or chest to give important medical treatment. When not put in correctly or kept clean, central lines can become a freeway for germs to enter the body and cause serious bloodstream infections. These infections can be deadly. Other achievements included improvements in lab techniques and technology that made it easier to identify contaminated foods more rapidly and accurately to help control the spread of foodborne illness outbreaks. Broader HIV screening recommendations led to an increase in the number of people getting earlier HIV diagnosis, which provided them earlier access to life-saving treatment and care. The development of a blood donor test to screen for West Nile Virus has identified an estimated 3,000 potentially infected U.S. blood donations, removing them from the blood supply.

Tobacco Control
The number of states with comprehensive smoke-free laws grew from zero in 2000 to 25 states and D.C. in 2010. In 2009, a new federal cigarette tax took effect, bringing the combined federal and average state excise tax for cigarettes to $2.21 per pack, an increase of 76

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Alabama’s Health
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Nurse Supervisor Is a Brave First Responder to the Hackleburg Tornado, Recounts Her Experience

Franklin County Health Department Clinic Supervisor Kim Wooten displayed her determination, dedication and courage in responding to the victims of the EF-5 tornado that almost leveled her town. At least 27 people died. Thirty of the town’s 31 businesses were destroyed, 197 buildings were demolished, and another 298 were damaged. This is her own description of how this nurse stepped forward to help her neighbors in a time of great danger and need.

On Wednesday, April 27, 2011, the town of Hackleburg was hit by a tornado around 3:20 p.m. I live in the town, so by 4 p.m. we began to receive text messages telling us that the school, the Piggly Wiggly grocery store and the Wrangler Distribution Plant were destroyed.

We had no power at the time. My husband went up town to see if what we were told was true. He came home almost in tears. He reported, “The town is gone and people are hurt.”

I got a blood pressure cuff and stethoscope together and went up to town to help. First, I went to the Piggly Wiggly parking lot to see if everyone had gotten out okay. In this lot was Dr. Morrow’s office, Ray’s Pharmacy, the grocery store and the Dollar General Store.

I was informed that all wounded had been moved to the First Baptist Church in town for triage, and they sent me there by way of police car. At the church, we triaged patients and sent several more to the emergency room. Some had to go by private vehicle. One patient that was severely injured was carried to the ER by way of the local flower shop van as we could not get enough EMS assistance to the area at that particular time.

All noncritical were sent to the basement of the church to rest and for any other support they needed. After helping with patients, others and I went to the command center located at the parking lot of the Panther Food Mart on Highway 43.

We went in groups of two or three, going “door to door,” or areas where we remembered a house to be, looking for any injured. We were instructed to put an X (with spray paint that was handed out to us) somewhere on the rubble if we did not find anyone and put an O if there were any deceased. If there was anyone injured, one person would stay with the injured person and the other had to go back for help.

Cell phones were down as far as calls, occasionally you could text. My partner and I went down Highway 43 (south, toward Hamilton) looking for injured or deceased people.

We found none, but there was so much rubble you could barely move and we had to stop twice as two more tornadoes were reported as being spotted close to the area. I actually jumped in the back of a truck that was parked on Highway 43 just to take cover.

After looking for patients or fatalities, I went back to the church to assist with anything, but by this time many volunteers were there as well as a van load from Keller Hospital. The group from Keller left shortly after arriving, as everyone that we could find that was hurt had been sent on and Keller ER was beginning to get bombarded with patients. I left for home around 9:30 p.m.

Kim Wooten
Franklin County Health Department

Area I Health Officer Dr. Karen Landers and Kim Wooten have worked together many years. Both are veterans of the Labor Day 2008 response to Hurricane Gustav during which Ms. Wooten helped make the shelter for evacuees from New Orleans operational. Both of them provided sick call rounds to the mass care shelter patients.

Dr. Landers commented, “Clearly, Kim’s superb nursing skills and compassion helped many patients during the devastation of Hackleburg. She is one of the heroes of this disaster and is a wonderful asset to public health.”

Kim Wooten
On most Friday afternoons Administrative Support Assistant Helen Norberg is working in the Home Health program of the DeKalb County Health Department in Fort Payne.

May 6 was not an ordinary Friday. Thanks to her daughter who nominated her for military family support recognition and First Lady Michelle Obama, Ms. Norberg was at the White House attending a Mother’s Day Tea.

Ms. Norberg’s daughter Julia is a sergeant who serves in the National Guard and has been deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. During her most recent overseas mission to Iraq, Ms. Norberg’s preschool age grandson Isaiah stayed with Ms. Norberg at her home in the small and somewhat isolated community of Mount Vernon.

One life-changing action may have made the difference between life and death for Isaiah. During horrendous tornadoes last year on April 24 and 25, Ms. Norberg gathered pillows and pulled mattresses to cover members of her family who were staying with her at her mobile home. But at 1 a.m. the mobile home was struck and the tornado’s power sent her swirling. Her feet and body hit the ceiling, roof and walls as she was brought into the tornado’s swell.

While no one expected a mountainside home to be destroyed, it was. A washing machine landed on her leg and all of the family’s belongings were strewn around everywhere. Ms. Norberg valiantly protected her grandson and he only suffered a scratch on his arm.

However, Ms. Norberg sustained a C-2 vertebral fracture in the tornado. While she was being treated at UAB Hospital, neighbors and friends bulldozed the remnants of her mangled mobile home to the side.

Ms. Norberg deeply appreciates the assistance and prayers of her co-workers at the health department after the tornado. “The health department people were so very supportive,” she said. “I even received cards from people in Montgomery.”

She feels blessed that the outcome was so positive. “My physical therapist was relieved it wasn’t a C-3 fracture,” Ms. Norberg said. “I was just blessed.” After just three months of therapy her back healed and is virtually back to normal.

Now she is in the process of building a new home, with the special feature of an 8-by-8 foot steel enforced storm shelter in the garage. As no emergency sirens are located nearby, she will be relying on a weather alert radio to warn of tornadoes.

Mother’s Day Tea in the East Room
Unbeknownst to Ms. Norberg, Julia had nominated her mother for this special recognition for support of service members, and she was selected. Both mother and her daughter were provided airfare to Washington, D.C., and lodging at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue for three nights.

At the tea in the East Room of the White House Ms. Norberg was one of two honored mothers specifically mentioned by Mrs. Obama. She also was able to meet Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden.

Dr. Biden said, “You are all heroes…the grandparents who step in with much needed support.”

In speaking with other honorees at the table at tea, Ms. Norberg tried to emphasize that her trials were minimal compared to those of the hundreds of Alabamians who were injured and killed in Alabama in tornadoes this spring.

In addition, she was pleased to meet actors Brigid Brannagh, Sterling K. Brown and Sally Pressman of the Lifetime Television program “Army Wives” at the tea.

Reflecting on the once-in-a-lifetime experience, Ms. Norberg said, “It was wonderful. I was so blessed and know I will be okay.”
senior environmentalist in Tallapoosa County, lives in Elmore County. After her home was narrowly missed by a mid-April tornado, on April 27 her home was again spared by less than a mile. Concerned for her neighbors, she used annual leave to help others clear trees and debris scattered by the storm. Doubtless, many other selfless acts of kindness were performed.

Pharmacy Division Director Charles Thomas remained busy in the aftermath. At least eight pharmacies were totally destroyed and many more sustained damage in the storm. To assist patients who had lost access to their prescription medications and for those unable to purchase new prescription drugs, a voucher program for pharmaceuticals was implemented for impacted areas. Maury West, director of the Social Work Division, and Stephan Mambazo, Emergency Preparedness social worker with the division, assisted with this as well.

The Alabama Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) reached out to participants who might not have been eligible for services prior to the storms.

Central Office staff worked to develop health messages appropriate to the situations occurring. Dr. Mary McIntyre, Medical Officer of the Bureau of Communicable Disease, and Immunization staff researched and made recommendations about the use of Tetanus Immune Globulin which were sent as guidance to health care providers. For example, Environmental Toxicologist John Guarisco and others issued guidance about airborne asbestos and other hazards.

“Everyone worked together to get things done that none of us could have done alone,” Dr. McIntyre said.

Planning and Training Pay Off After EOC Collapses in Tuscaloosa

The existence of a disaster plan and plenty of training facilitated a quick and effective state response to the massive storm damage. Ironically, on April 21 and 22 Public Health Area 3 Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Tommy Dockery had attended a Threat/Risk Assessment class in the Emergency Operations Center at the Curry Building in Tuscaloosa. The simulated incident they practiced in class was that of a tornado hitting the EOC. In working through the scenario, his work group listed the 18-inch concrete ceiling as a positive for survival.

The next Wednesday the tornado predictions brought Dockery back to the EOC in the Curry Building where he was among the first to see a tornado from the basement bunker that housed Tuscaloosa’s emergency response equipment and personnel. They were tracking tornado activity with video cameras and radar, and issuing warnings. At 5 p.m. one of the cameras caught a massive tornado nearby, and then two minutes later there was a loud boom and the power went out.

“The whole building came crashing down on top of us,” Dockery stated in an interview with the Los Angeles Times. He explained that the dozen or so people there used axes, picks and crowbars to dig themselves out in the dark. Even though all of their vehicles were destroyed, no one was injured. As they had determined in their training exercise, the steel-and-concrete fortified basement helped save their lives.

EMS Delivers Organized Response on April 27

A preliminary report indicates that tornadoes began in the predawn hours in Waterloo in Lauderdale County, at least 56 more were located, and finally concluded at 9:50 p.m. in Verbena in Chilton County.

EMS Director Dennis Blair stated, “During this event, our office sent only 23 ambulances to affected areas in Alabama. This indicates a well-organized EMS response. While no one can adequately prepare for such a wide-range disaster, I feel EMS was ready and the professional response saved countless lives.”

In thanking EMS providers for their dedication and sacrifice, he said, “I hope we never see this type of event again. If and when we do, I know we will be ready.”

Environmentalists Work to Protect Food and Water Safety in Storm Response

Power outages in much of the state necessitated warnings to both the public and food service establishments to caution them about safe disposal of spoiled food. In the aftermath of the tornadoes, public health environmentalists in areas 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 made 1,154 visits to food service establishments, issued 12 emergency orders, oversaw

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35 voluntary closures based on their visits and issued 22 Stop/Sell/Seize and Hold orders. A total of 82 visits were made to shelters and other non-permitted facilities and 246 additional activities related to storm response were performed.

These totals do not include a variety of general response activities such as phone calls related to boil water notices issued by water authorities.

Holding Tank Requirements Suspended
The severity of the storms and widespread damage resulted in a large number of Alabamians without homes. The state’s onsite sewage and treatment disposal rules provide for natural disasters and authorize the suspension of certain rules “for specifically affected persons, sites or conditions, and may institute a provisional regulatory plan until the disaster is abated.”

The Bureau of Environmental Services developed a plan to deal with the existing damaged systems to allow homeowners to use an above ground tank to dispose of the onsite wastewater. In these situations, an Application For A Permit To Install (Repair) is required along with a copy of a sewage pumping contract with a licensed pumper and verification that the pumper retains possession and responsibility for the tank. The tank is to be inspected on a weekly basis or as needed and pumped as needed. Permits to Install and Approvals For Use expire one year from the issuance date.

In Jefferson County, environmental field staff began assessing areas with power outages the day after the storms. An estimated 950 permitted facilities were without power. The storms caused significant damage to the water supply including ruptured water supply lines, and loss of power which resulted in loss of pressure in some areas.

Environmentalists also made 11 food safety assessments at mass care shelters. In Jefferson County alone there were 124 permitted facilities affected by boil water notices, 210 facilities with documented visits for assessment, 15 notices of violations issued to cease/restrict operations due to power or water, and 173 facilities documented as voluntarily closed or with restricted operations. Fourteen food and three lodging facilities were damaged or destroyed causing extended closure, and, sadly, two fatalities were associated with permitted facilities.

Medical Needs Shelter Experiences Pull Public Health Family Together
A public health responsibility is to staff medical needs shelters. Many more shelter teams asked for the opportunity to be deployed than were needed. One of the Public Health Area 9 team members who was deployed to Tuscaloosa was Suzanne Terrell, L.G.S.W., social work manager with the Clarke County Health Department. She made the following comment about her experience.

“I think while the disaster was complete devastation, overall, it was a very positive experience for those of us responding. We were able to respond and work with others we often don’t get a chance to work with side by side. Being deployed to situations such as these pull us closer together as a public health family. We are able to help the citizens of Alabama in need, but at the same time they touch us. We laughed and cried with patients. You can always look back at these times and remember what public health is all about. No disaster I have ever responded to has ever been the same, but I am always touched and my life is changed by each one of them in a positive way.”

Ms. Terrell said, “People always say ‘You must be crazy to want to go work long hours and sleep on a cot!’ That response always makes me smile. I guess it’s something you can’t understand until you have been there. There is no other experience like it in the world. For those of us who were able to respond several times we knew this going into it...for those going for the first time, they know it now...and for those who have never been...I hope they get that experience and can enjoy knowing what a difference they can and have made in the life of someone else while being touched themselves at the same time.”

Smiles...For a Few Moments
Two teams from Public Health Area 10 answered the call on April 28 to staff a medical needs shelter in DeKalb County at a school in Henager. Team members could empathize...
Tornadoes, continued from page 6
with the shelter residents because of their experiences after
the devastating EF4 tornado in Enterprise in March 2007
which killed eight students and destroyed the high school.

After arriving their first two patients were an elderly mother
and her daughter; both were oxygen dependent, Lesa Smith,
area emergency preparedness coordinator, said.

“As we were talking with them the mother stated they were
friends with Elvis and offered to show me a picture of us
with them. Thinking she might be senile or confused, I
was prepared to respond politely as she dug in her purse
several moments trying to locate the pictures. She finally
located two pictures that she must carry around with her
everywhere. One was of her, and one of her daughter, both
hugging a young Elvis in his early twenties.

“For awhile they were able to get away from the horror of
losing everything and having to stay in a shelter. For a few
moments they had smiles on their faces. We gave them
the basic needs of life: food, shelter, water and oxygen.
In return they gave us stories of Elvis and the memories
of better days gone by.”

“We were all humbled by this experience and wish that
we could have done more. Helping those in need; that is
what public health is all about.”

Administrators View Impacted Areas
State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson, Assistant State
Health Officer Dr. Tom Miller and Center for Emergency
Preparedness Director Andy Mullins made several trips
to areas impacted by the tornadoes and noted the caring
actions of public health workers amid the devastation.

Upon reflection, it seems that each disaster brings new
needs to light, such as the following observations.

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Farmers Market in Dallas County Increases Access to Healthier Foods Through System Changes, Enhancements and Partnerships

In a state where less than 10 percent of residents consume an adequate amount of fruit and vegetables each day, the Strategic Alliance for Health Community of Selma in Dallas County is demonstrating that system changes, enhancements and partnerships can combine to increase access to healthier foods at the Dallas County Farmers Market.

The five-year Alabama Strategic Alliance for Health is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Strategic Alliance for Health communities seek to improve community health through sustainable, innovative and evidence-based community health promotion and chronic disease prevention interventions that promote policy, systems and environmental changes.

To do this, Strategic Alliance for Health communities focus on building local capacity to institute policy, systems and environmental changes related to promoting physical activity and nutrition and reducing tobacco use and exposure; improving and increasing access to quality care; helping eliminate racial/ethnic and socioeconomic health disparities; and reducing complications from and incidence of heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

Alabama Strategic Alliance for Health has contracted with the nonprofit Vaughan Community Health Services, Inc. (VCHS) to help implement these interventions in Dallas County. The primary purpose of VCHS is to improve the health status of the residents of Selma and Dallas County through education and preventive interventions.

According to the State Indicator Report on Fruits & Vegetables, 2009, (CDC) Alabama is one of four states where less than 10 percent of the population consumes fruit two or more times a day and vegetables three or more times a day. Additionally, approximately 38 percent of the county’s population receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. Increasing access to healthier foods through system changes and physical enhancements in a Farmers Market will positively impact this problem and the implication of this evidence-based intervention is that it will increase access to healthier foods for approximately 42,000 or more residents.

Dallas County has one Farmers Market recognized by the Alabama Farmers Market Authority and it is located in the City of Selma, adjacent to Valley Creek Park. This area is one of high traffic as the park is also the location of a city playground, football stadium, track, and baseball field. The market is located along a highly traveled state highway and is housed under a metal pavilion. The Selma/Dallas County Farmers Market pavilion was built in approximately 1979 as a joint use project of both the county and city. Dallas County deeded its portion of the pavilion to the city of Selma due to maintenance concerns since Bloch Park/Valley Creek Park were city funded, managed and owned properties.

Through partnerships with the Alabama Farmers Market Authority, City of Selma, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and local farmers, the Dallas County Farmers Market has incorporated significant system and environmental changes which are as follows:

- Accepting electronic methods of payment, including debit, credit and SNAP benefits;
- Improving the facility’s physical appearance;
- Adding signage visible from road; and
- Extending the months of operation.

Local newspaper coverage has promoted these changes throughout the community.

In conjunction with the rehabilitation of the physical structure, increasing accessibility by extending the months the market is open has taken place. It was open June to October, and now it is open from early May through December. This is to capture the consumers interested in strawberries and early spring fruits and vegetables, and continue through the last week in December for sweet potatoes, greens, squash, turnips and winter vegetables. There is a volunteer manager and co-manager in place. There is advertising and tighter controls by the city Parks and Recreation Department to assure that needed repairs are completed quickly and that the area is cleaned prior to each market day.

continued page 14
In the future, plans are to address health and safety issues including establishing the best locations to shelter people. Emergency preparedness messages may include the need for children and adults to wear bicycle helmets during tornadoes to help prevent head trauma.

Among the many employees who have been especially singled out during recent emergency events are the following:

Jason Azbell  
Summer Beard  
Jeff Black  
Mike Boggan  
Elizabeth Foster  
Gary Hodge  
Chris Jackson  
Sam LeMaster

Evan Long  
Jamie Medley  
Matt Patton  
Chuck Rhodes  
Matt Warner

Ann Blackmon  
Jeff Chism  
B.J. Diltz  
Tracy Elmore  
Carolyn Frierson  
Randy Northam  
Mike Simpson  
Shernay Wells  
Rhonda Williams

Lem Burell  
Vaughan Fleming  
Mark Hendrix  
Bridgette Key  
Misty Markham  
Stanford Miller  
Angela C. Reams  
Bobby S. White

Linda Childers  
Denice Clark  
Burton Fisher  
Malcolm Givhan  
Elizabeth Hopkins  
Machelle Jackson  
Betty Jowers  
Tina Norwood

Elvira Phillips  
Natalie Quinney  
Donna Rhone  
Sarah Smith  
John Strother  
Kristy Wilkinson  
Steve Wood  
Daniel Wy-smulek

Teresa Banks  
Renae Carpenter  
Josh Coleman  
Charlotte Dettelsen  
Selena Dreadin  
Kimberly Gordon  
Dnene Johnson  
David Kelly  
Lynne Noah  
Mary Ann Pugh  
Peggy J. Roberts  
Kelly Singleton  
Shirley Singleton  
Suzanne Terrell  
Jessica Wade  
Audra Wilson

Public Health Area 1

Public Health Area 2

Public Health Area 3

Public Health Area 4

Public Health Area 5

Public Health Area 6

Public Health Area 7

Public Health Area 8

Public Health Area 9

Public Health Area 10

Achievements, continued from page 2

Motor Vehicle Safety

From 2000 to 2009, the death rate related to motor vehicle travel went from 14.9 per 100,000 people to 11 per 100,000. The injury rate fell from 1,130 per 100,000 people to 722. The decade also saw a decline of 49 percent in pedestrian deaths among children, and a 58 percent decline in the number of bicyclist deaths. These achievements are likely the result of improved safety of vehicles and roadways, and safer behavior on the part of both motorists and pedestrians as a result of strong seat belt, child safety seat and other regulations.

Cardiovascular Disease Prevention

Heart disease and stroke are still among the nation’s leading killers. However, deaths from both diseases have declined over the past decade, continuing a trend that began in the early 1900s for stroke and the 1960s

continued page 14
Mother’s Room in RSA Tower Provides Opportunities for Breastfeeding

“Cozy and convenient” are among the positive adjectives Savannah Mehren of the Injury Prevention Branch uses to describe the Mother’s Room on the 13th Floor of the RSA Tower. Her daughter Olivia Ann is now 10 months old.

For several years the Mother’s Room has offered a quiet, private space for breastfeeding mothers, which promotes a breastfeeding friendly environment for mothers who work in the building.

An added plus is that State Lactation Coordinator Michell Grainger of the Bureau of Family Health Services is available to answer questions.

“New mothers are encouraged to continue breastfeeding their infants after returning to work,” Ms. Grainger said. “The Mother’s Room helps them achieve their breastfeeding goals.”

The Mother’s Room features comfortable chairs, a breast pump (mothers bring their own attachments that may be provided to them at the hospital), and a small refrigerator for storing milk. The room also has a bulletin board featuring photographs of the many adorable babies whose mothers use or have previously used the room.

For more information about breastfeeding and its many benefits or the Mother’s Room, please contact Michell Grainger, michell.grainger@adph.state.al.us, (334) 206-2921.

CDC Recognizes Alabama Cancer Registry

The Alabama Statewide Cancer Registry (ASCR) received a certificate for quality, completeness and timeliness in its 2011 data submission to National Program of Cancer Registries of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

National Program for Cancer Registries (NPCR) certification was established in 2010, although data have been submitted for a number of years. Not all state cancer registries can meet all three standards. This is the ASCR’s second consecutive year to meet all three standards.

Certification standards were met for the following:
- Advanced National Data Quality and Completeness Program.
- National Data Quality and Completeness Program.
- USCS Publication Standard.

The ASCR is a statewide, population-based cancer registry which collects data on all cancer cases diagnosed or treated in Alabama. The registry was established in 1995 by the Alabama Department of Public Health in response to a state law (Act 95-275) that made cancer a reportable condition. Data collection began on Jan. 1, 1996.

NPCR provided funding, guidance, and program standards for state cancer registries throughout the U.S. In recognition of the ASCR’s achievements, Alabama’s cancer data is included in the United States Cancer Statistics report.

White House, continued from page 4

Excerpts From The Transcript Of The First Lady’s Remarks

And then there’s Helen Norberg and her daughter Julia. They know a thing or two about what I’m talking about. When Julia had to deploy to Iraq, Helen was there every day to help take care of their 3-year-old grandson Isaiah. She enrolled him in gymnastics, probably just to settle him down. She took him to his first dentist appointment. And since the only time Julia and Isaiah could speak was during the day, Helen would often leave work, drive to Isaiah’s school with her cell phone, just so he could hear his mom’s voice.

And then, last year as Julia’s deployment was coming to an end, Helen’s house was destroyed by a tornado. Helen jumped on top of Isaiah to protect him. She broke two vertebrae in her back. When the storm died down, Isaiah had nothing but a small scratch on his arm. And as Julia said, she has been the best grandmother and mother any soldier could ask for.

We believe that this is what you deserve from us, because showing our gratitude to those who serve our nation whether it’s on the battlefield or at home, is something that every single American can do. And it’s something that every single American should do.

So, to everyone here, I just want to say thank you. This is a very small way to say thank you. Thank you for your strength, your commitment. Thank you for setting an example for the rest of us. It has been such a pleasure getting to meet all of you.
For Martha Sparks, a guidance counselor with Madison City Schools, Weight Watchers® at Work has helped her lose and sustain a healthy weight loss of 31 pounds for the past two years.

“Even though I have met my goal, it never hurts to hear the message again and to be accountable and aware of what I’m eating,” Ms. Sparks said. “That means eating one cookie instead of 10 and not eating that third and fourth piece of pizza.”

Weight Watchers is available at half price to State Employees’ Health Insurance Plan and Public Education Employees Health Insurance Plan members and their dependents. Approved members will pay $85 (approximately half price) for a 15-week session, provided the member attends at least 12 of the 15 meetings.

The PointsPlus™ program addresses the issues that have always worked against weight loss such as hunger, temptation, or just a bad day. Participants learn to choose foods that keep them full longer, so that they do not eat for the wrong reasons. This helps them lose weight and keep it off. Meetings can be set up atworksites for convenience. To hold a class on-site, at least 15 participants are required. If the required minimum number of participants cannot be enrolled, Weight Watchers will gladly place PEEHIP members in a local meeting.

“We have the most awesome leader who is very supportive,” Ms. Sparks said emphatically. “She encourages us to step outside our little square box, try new foods, or new ways of cooking an old recipe.”

In addition to eating a healthful diet to maintain her weight loss, Ms. Sparks and her son regularly walk early in the morning so they won’t fall back on the excuses of being “too tired” or having too many other things to do. Exercise is very important to maintain a healthy weight.

Ready to join?
If your telephone area code is 205 or 256 contact Amy Caldwell at (334) 206-7943 or email her at amy.caldwell@adph.state.al.us.

If your phone area code is 334 or 251 contact Matt James at (334) 206-5588 or email him at matthew.james@adph.state.al.us.

You may also call toll free at 1-800-252-1818.

*A BMI of 25 or above is required for eligibility. Visit www.consumer.gov/weightloss/bmi.html to calculate your BMI. Weight Watchers® is a registered trademark of Weight Watchers® International Inc. All rights reserved.

Employees Celebrate National Employee Health and Fitness Day

National Employee Health and Fitness Day is a national health observance, created to promote the benefits of physical activity for individuals through their work site health promotion activities. In observance of the day, the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, the Governor’s Commission on Physical Fitness, and the Alabama Sports Festival sponsored a one-mile walk around the State Capitol Building on April 29.
Sumter County Holds Prostate Cancer Screening Event on Public Health Day

Public Health Day was celebrated on Saturday, April 2, at the Sumter County Health Department in Livingston from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free prostate cancer screenings were provided to men by Urology Centers of Alabama, the Urology Health Foundation, Health and Wellness Education Center, and the Sumter County Health Department.

A record-breaking single day total of 168 men were screened for prostate cancer. Two urologists, Dr. Thomas E. Moody and Dr. Tom Holley, Urology Centers of Alabama; the Urology Health Foundation; Health and Education Wellness Center and Sumter County Health Department were involved in the screening process.

Screening for prostate cancer involved drawing blood for PSA that measures the level of protein called prostate specific antigen in the blood. A physical examination was given to all men to detect prostate cancer. This examination is called DRE or digital rectal examination.

“The examination takes 10 minutes to perform and could save a man’s life,” Assistant Area Administrator Ashvin Parikh said. Last year 104 men were screened in Sumter County. Four men in the county were diagnosed with prostate cancer through the screening and received follow-up treatment. Area 7 Administrator Jackie Holliday said, “The partnership between the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Urology Health Foundation has improved the quality of life for countless persons in medically under-served areas of Alabama. This partnership is a testament to what can be accomplished when striving toward common goals.”

Honorable Mention Goes to Alabama for NDEP Campaign

The Alabama Diabetes Prevention and Control Program was recognized for innovative use and promotion of the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) campaign, “Reaching People Where They Are, For Good Health.”

The awards, called the “Frankies,” recognize innovative use of NDEP materials and resources as the cornerstone of diabetes prevention and control programs and initiatives, as well as exemplary promotion and incorporation of NDEP materials and messages into existing programs and activities.

The Frankie Awards are named in honor of Frank Vinicor, MD, MPH, former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) Division of Diabetes Translation (DDT) and a founder of the National Diabetes Education Program.

The awards were presented April 11 in Minneapolis, Minn.

John Wible Retires

General Counsel John Wible was honored with a large reception May 18 in honor of his retirement after nearly 37 years of service to the Alabama Department of Public Health. Wible led those attending in singing “Happy Trails” as he played his guitar. The State Committee of Public Health also praised his contributions to the department.

State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson presents a retirement certificate to Wible.

Wible leads a farewell song.
If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee’s supervisor and a copy by e-mail to arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee’s name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

Trina Bryan  
John W. Davis, Jr.,  
Dewana Smith  
Public Health Area 6  
from Lem Burell  
Anniston, Ala.

Margaret Huffman, LGSW  
Perry County  
Health Department  
from Suzanne L. Terrell, LGSW  
Grove Hill, Ala.

Glenda Adams  
Center for  
Health Statistics  
from Donald Rollins  
Afghanistan

William Kennedy  
Home and Community Services  
from Judith G. Drew  
Montgomery, Ala.

Sandra Daniels  
Center for  
Health Statistics  
from Karen Young  
Clanton, Ala.

Saundra Levert  
Center for  
Health Statistics  
from Donna Cason  
Decatur, Ala.

Connie Danner  
Center for  
Health Statistics  
from Ann Alverson  
Pensacola, Fla.

Theresa Mulkey  
Center for  
Health Statistics  
from Dianne Daugherty  
Cantonment, Fla.

Aisha Davis  
Baldwin County  
Health Department  
from an anonymous client

Kathie Peters  
Center for  
Health Statistics  
from Jacquelyn Hairston  
Tallahassee, Fla.

Janie Gregg, R.N.  
Denise Heald, R.N.  
Kathy Nichols, R.N.  
Kay Steadman, R.N.  
Health Provider Standards  
from Gerald Bell  
Guntersville, Ala.

Geneva Thomas  
Center for  
Health Statistics  
from Sung G. Oh  
Suwon, Korea  
Lorenzo Williams  
Stone Mountain, Ga.

Mike Huff  
Lee McElvaine  
Bureau of  
Clinical Laboratories  
from Jeannine Parker  
Montgomery, Ala.

Linda Broaddrick  
Public Health Area 1

Freddie Brown  
Bureau of  
Clinical Laboratories

Joyce Driver  
Madison County  
Health Department

Mary Everett  
Washington County  
Health Department

Margaret Huffman, LGSW  
Perry County  
Health Department  
from Suzanne L. Terrell, LGSW  
Grove Hill, Ala.

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Health Statistics  
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Tallahassee, Fla.
Also, through another project, Strategic Alliance for Health has been able to make the farmers market safer through the patrol of the area by the Selma Police Department Segway officers. The police chief has written policy in regard to patrolling the area during farmers market hours and increased use of the market, walking path, and the playground next to the farmers market.

The evaluation of this change strategy focuses on the measurement of increased access to the market by establishing longer months of operation. Additionally, in the past, hours of operation were vague and now they are clearly stated in promotion pieces as being from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

The volunteer manager of the Selma-Dallas County Farmers Market stated, “The rehabilitation, advertising, extended hours, and adherence to rules has definitely improved the number of consumers.”

As implementation of this intervention continues, baseline data can be established and measurement can begin to capture increased interest/participation in fresh fruit and vegetable marketing on the part of local farmers and increased interest in buying those products from community residents.

Cancer Early Detection Program has reduced disparities by providing breast and cervical cancer screenings to uninsured women.

**Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention**

By 2010, 23 states had comprehensive lead poisoning prevention laws compared to just five states in 1990. Enforcement of these statutes, along with federal laws that reduce hazards in the highest risk housing, has significantly reduced the prevalence of lead poisoning. The percentage of children aged 1 to 5 years with elevated blood lead levels has declined significantly going from 88.2 percent in 1980 to under 1 percent in 2008.

**Improved Public Health Preparedness and Response**

There has been much progress made since September 11, 2001, expanding the capacity of the public health system to respond to public health emergencies and disease outbreaks. The first decade of the 21st century also saw improvements in laboratory response for identifying and reporting disease outbreaks. In addition, influenza vaccination, along with other public health measures taken during the 2009 outbreak of H1N1, prevented an estimated 5–10 million cases, 30,000 hospitalizations, and 1,500 deaths. The decade also saw the percentage of state public health agencies that were prepared to use Strategic National...
On April 7-8 the Bureau of Family Health Services held its Seventh Annual ADPH Nurse Practitioner Conference, “Striving for Excellence in Women’s Health.”

A half-day meeting/preconference was held at the Montgomery County Health Department Auditorium April 7. Preconference presentations included the following:

- The “gal-Get A Healthy Life” Campaign by Katherine Blaze.
- A new blood pressure tool and the “Power to End Stroke” Campaign by Melanie Rightmyer.
- “Implanon Removals Panel Discussion” with a panel of certified registered nurse practitioners: Ramona Hawkins, Merren Maddox, Joseph Rightmyer, Martha Southern and Patsy Watson.
- “ADPH Protocol Update” by Kitty Norris, Agnes Oberkor and Laurie Stout.

Pamela Moody, Area 3 Nursing Director, was presented a Certificate of Recognition in honor of her achievement of Doctorate of Nursing Practice. This demonstrates her continued contribution to professional development and exhibits her personal commitment to provide exceptional care for the women of Alabama. Dr. Moody exemplifies the motto of “Striving for Excellence in Women’s Health.”

Attendees assembled April 8 at the Prattville Marriott at Capitol Hill for a well-rounded educational conference and lecture series which included:

- “2011 Pharmacology Update” by Dr. Glenn E. Farr, professor of Clinical Pharmacy, the University of Tennessee;
- “Breast Update 2011” lecture by Dr. Lynn Dyess, professor of surgery and physiology, University of South Alabama College of Medicine;
- “NP Professional Liability Risks” by Jan Hickey, MSN, FNP-BC, ProAssurance;
- “Domestic Violence” by Bridgett Starr, Social Worker, Rape Awareness Campaign Board;
- “Programs and Initiatives to Address the Underserved Women of Alabama,” by Elana M. Parker, M.Ed, Health Equity Programs Manager with the Office of Women’s Health/Minority Health.

The annual conference, which serves to update and enhance the knowledge of the ADPH nurse practitioners, was attended by 48 Family Health Services nurse practitioners who serve patients in county health departments across the state.

By Elizabeth S. Nichols, C.R.N.P.

Achievements, continued from page 14

Stockpile (SNS) material increasing from 70 percent to 98 percent. SNS has large quantities of medicine and medical supplies to protect the American public if there is a public health emergency (such as terrorist attack, flu outbreak or earthquake) severe enough to cause local supplies to run out.

For more information about the 10 great domestic public health achievements of 2001-2010 visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr.
Environmental Question: Caterer and Leftovers

**QUESTION:** My daughter is being married in Alabama. The reception will be at a lodge with full kitchen facilities. The caterer has informed us we cannot keep any leftover items we have purchased. Is this correct?

**ANSWER:** If the food is prepared in an approved food establishment and by a person(s)/caterer that knows how to handle food safely, the food is safe to eat. If the food is safe to eat and stays at the proper temperature during the event, the caterer should advise you how to transport your food from the facility to home. This can be accomplished by labeling the food containers.

However, if there is a contract that you have signed from the caterer stating that the food should not be removed, discuss this matter further with your caterer.

**Calendar of Events**

**July 13**
Recognizing Risk Factors for Falling: Fall Prevention Session One (Home Health Aides and Attendants), 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528.

**July 20**
Health and Social Issues Impacting Underserved Youth, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Maury West, (334) 206-3383.

**August 4**
ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

**August 5**
ADPH Nurse Practitioners Update, 9-11 a.m.
For more information contact Ramona Hawkins, (205) 221-9775.

**August 10**
Compliance in Home Care (Home Health Nurses), 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.

**August 17**
Aging Gracefully and Health Care Services for Older Adults, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Elana Parker, (334) 206-7980.

**September 14**
Infection Control Update, Home Health Aides and Attendants, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528.

**September 21**
Mental Health Issues in Underserved Youth and the Aging Population, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Elana Parker, (334) 206-7980.
Alabama House Resolution Commends CCHD Screening Efforts

The Alabama House of Representatives adopted a resolution commending the Alabama Department of Public Health for implementing a policy for birthing hospitals to perform pulse oximetry testing of newborns to detect critical congenital heart disease (CCHD) prior to hospital discharge.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has recommended that screening for CCHD be added to the panel of newborn screening tests for infants. Screening by measuring blood oxygen saturation with pulse oximetry technology in the first days of life can identify seven specific structural heart defects and prevent delayed diagnosis and treatment.

Each birthing facility in the state has been requested to voluntarily implement screening for CCHD and to report failed screening results to the department’s Newborn Screening Program. The screening targets seven specific anomalies classified as CCHD to be detected in the hospital’s nursery setting. The test is painless and noninvasive.

The guidelines were developed through the collaboration of many stakeholders whose expertise was crucial to the process. The program met its goal of creating a protocol for pulse oximetry screening on well infants in Alabama’s 53 birthing facilities by April 2012. Hospital Guidelines for Implementing Pulse Oximetry Screening for CCHD were mailed in March to all birthing facilities in the state in order to assist hospitals with implementation. The guidelines may be viewed at adph.org/newbornscreening. The Alabama Hospital Association, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, the Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Heart Association were also commended for their collaborative efforts working in conjunction with the department to achieve this very important policy in the health care of newborns in Alabama.

“This has been an unbelievably positive experience,” said Dianne Sims, director of Children’s Health, Bureau of Family Health Services. “The work of pulling it all together involved a lot of cooperation with many people. While it’s still a pilot project, every birthing hospital in the state is involved.”

Work groups which convened in November and December 2011 accomplished their tasks ahead of schedule. Ms. Sims thanked Dr. Wally Carlo of UAB Hospital and parent advocate Susan Colburn of Children’s Rehabilitation Services for their valuable contributions. (The pair will present a workshop at the Alabama Public Health Association conference May 10.)

According to the referral network protocol, newborns whose screening results are positive for CCHD must be evaluated by a pediatric cardiologist and/or a neonatologist. Guidelines were adapted from the Children’s National Medical Center Congenital Heart Disease Screening Program Toolkit. The Newborn Screening Program has conducted a follow-up survey of hospitals and received many positive comments.
Alabamian municipalities are protecting more residents from secondhand smoke than ever before because of the passage of additional local smokefree air ordinances. Alabama tied with California as a smokefree leader in the Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights (ANR) selection of the annual ANR Smokefree Indoor Air Challenge Award recipients. This award recognizes the states that achieve the greatest number of strong local smokefree laws each year – either by passing new ordinances or strengthening existing laws.

Alabama will be receiving the ANR crystal award for significant accomplishment in leading the U.S. local smokefree movement in 2011. The 2011 winners are based on the analysis of all new laws enacted during the year that meet the ANR Foundation’s criteria for 100 percent smokefree bars, restaurants and non-hospitality workplaces.

According to ANR, a national nonprofit organization, “This is a landmark achievement for public health in the state. This progress is thanks to the hard work of many advocates, champions and networks. This is Alabama’s first time winning the First Place Award.”

Working with local coalitions and the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Alabama, area tobacco control coordinators reported 6 new city smokefree ordinances in 2011. In addition, 5 new tobacco/smoke-free hospital policies, 3 new tobacco-free college/university policies, and 19 new smoke/tobacco-free worksite policies were adopted in the year.

Nationwide, there are now at least 507 cities and counties with strong local laws to ensure smokefree air in at least nonhospitality workplaces, restaurants and bars. Ten years ago, there were less than 50. Thanks in large part to the success of local smokefree laws, many states now have strong smokefree laws as well.

A chart showing the dramatic increase in strong local smokefree ordinances over the years can be found at this website: http://no-smoke.org/pdf/current_smokefree_ordinances_by_year.pdf.

**MMWR Features Alabama Reporting of Severe Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease**

The March 30 issue of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report titled “Notes from the Field: Severe Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease Associated with Coxsackievirus A6 — Alabama, Connecticut, California, and Nevada, November 2011–February 2012” included a report by Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention Dr. Mary McIntyre and others.

As described in the February issue of Alabama’s Health, hand, foot and mouth disease is a common viral illness caused by enteroviruses that predominantly affects children aged less than 5 years. This was the first outbreak in the United States associated with enterovirus serotype Coxsackievirus A6. In the United States, outbreaks typically occur during summer and autumn months. As of April 26, 2012, 45 cases have been reported in Alabama.

Departmental reporters credited in the MMWR article were Mary McIntyre, M.D., M.P.H.; Kelly M. Stevens, M.S.; Sherri Davidson, M.P.H.; Tina Pippin and Dagny Magill, M.P.H.
Blount County Coroner John Mark Vaughn has witnessed the results of prescription drug abuse far too many times in his career, and he urges awareness of its dangers. In a review of fatalities in his county, drug overdoses accounted for an alarming number of deaths.

“This problem is completely out of control,” Vaughn said. “We’ve got to do something to stop our citizens from partaking of the ‘Blount County cocktail,’ a mixture of prescribed drugs such as methadone and Xanax.” Vaughn added that he is even more concerned about prescription drug abuse than with use of illegal drugs such as methamphetamines and crack cocaine because of the higher death rates associated with prescription drugs.

Prescription drug abuse occurs not only in small rural counties; it exists throughout the state. The Alabama Department of Public Health joins Vaughn and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in warning the public about the deadly epidemic of prescription painkiller abuse and the rise in drug-related injuries and deaths.

According to the CDC, in 2008, most of the deaths in the U.S. that were due to drug overdoses were caused by prescription drugs. Also according to the CDC, Alabama’s rate of prescription painkillers sold per 10,000 people in 2010 was among the highest in the nation. Persons who misuse pain relievers often get them from a friend or relative, sometimes without the knowledge of the person for whom the medication was prescribed.

In the years 2008-2010 in Alabama, 8 percent of deaths in 18- to 25-year-olds and 9 percent of deaths in 26- to 44-year-olds were attributed to unintentional poisoning by certain drugs or biological substances.

Alabama has had the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program in place to monitor prescription drug abuse since April 2006. Goals of the program, which is managed through the Pharmacy Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health, are as follows:

- Provide information for medical practitioners and pharmacists regarding the controlled substance use of their patients.
- Reduce prescription drug abuse by providers and patients.
- Reduce time and effort to explore leads and assess the merits of possible drug diversion legal proceedings.
- Educate medical practitioners, pharmacists, policy makers, law enforcement and the public regarding the diversion, abuse and misuse of controlled substances.

“In 2011 we identified individuals going to more than six medical practitioners’ offices and six pharmacies for controlled substances. Our program notifies each medical practitioner and pharmacy about the individuals each month,” Charles Thomas, division director, said. “Our records provide information on those who shop around for medications. Acquiring drugs under false pretenses is illegal.”

In 2007 in Alabama, according to U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration estimates, 35,000 adolescents age 12 to 17 used prescription pain relievers for nonmedical reasons and 193,000 residents age 18 and older reported nonmedical prescription pain reliever use.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said powerful prescription pain and anxiety drugs are used more frequently and in greater quantities than in the past, so monitoring them is increasingly important. “Medical practitioners, pharmacists, patients and families need to be vigilant against the misuse of prescription drugs,” Williamson said.

He added, “The person who struggles with drug dependence or addiction needs care and support. This program is a tool that can help prevent prescription drug abuse.”

For more information about Alabama’s Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, visit adph.org/pdmp/. Also, the CDC offers information about prescription painkiller overdoses and preventive measures at http://www.cdc.gov/VitalSigns/PainkillerOverdoses/index.html#Risk.
At a time when there is increased public interest in the amount of contaminants in water, the Alabama Department of Public Health’s Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL) has received grant funding to promote environmental data exchange.

The BCL received this prestigious award through the 2011 National Information Exchange Network Grant Program. The BCL and the Bureau of Information Technology (IT) are using this funding to assess, design and implement an electronic file transfer schema to facilitate data transfer from the BCL to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM).

This system will be compatible with data requirements for both the Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) and eBeaches data exchanges. The goals of this effort are as follows:

- Reducing paperwork
- Automating manual tasks
- Creating easier accessibility to information
- Automating electronic data exchange of comprehensive laboratory data from a new Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) to public health partners

The BCL is not only responsible for clinical testing to determine disease, but also for bacteriological analyses of drinking water samples and recreational waters for the EPA Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Program. In this project ADEM is utilizing an eXtensible Markup Language (XML) schema, the Electronic Drinking Water Report (eDWR), to support data transfer. The XML schema is broad enough to accommodate all types of water data, but also allows states to implement only those pieces that are appropriate for their individual state needs.

“This grant represents the forward thinking of the BCL to address not only standardized electronic data exchange but also the ability to link additional laboratory data to results,” Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention Dr. Mary McIntyre said.

Current EPA reports seek only a small number of data elements from the laboratory. BCL is envisioning the capability to exchange linked quality control data elements, such as the date of the laboratory test, field-generated or laboratory-generated samples, target and nontarget substances, and important batching information.

These technical-sounding elements allow data reviewers to verify and validate results. Nationally, there is growing interest in transparency, accountability and increased

continued page 6

Silver Addys Presented to Health Communications Designers

The American Advertising Federation-Montgomery awarded the department four silver Addy awards for work produced for departmental programs. The awards were presented on Feb. 25 in Montgomery. Entries were evaluated based on execution, creativity, quality, consumer appeal and content. The awards presented were for the following entries:

- PDMP - Prescription Drug Monitoring Program of the Pharmacy Division, Bureau of Professional and Support Services - Full-page Magazine Ad
- Colorectal Cancer Prevention - FITWAY-Fight Back Campaign, Cancer Prevention and Control Division, Bureau of Family Health Services - Mixed Media Campaign (TV, Print)
- HPV Campaign - Cancer Prevention and Control Division, Bureau of Family Health Services - Mixed Media Campaign (TV, Print)
- GAL Campaign - Women’s Health Division, Bureau of Family Health Services - Mixed Media Campaign (TV, Print)

Award-winning designers (shown left to right) are Noelle Ahmann, Danny Doyle, Laura Smith and Karl Bryant. Not shown are Katherine Blaze, who developed the concept and copy for the PDMP, HPV and GAL campaigns, and Drew Nelson, who developed the research behind the GAL campaign. FReD-Full Resolution Design was responsible for television production.
Dr. Donald Williamson Receives Award for National Leadership in Newborn Screening

The March of Dimes recognized the Alabama Department of Public Health for its leadership in newborn screening at a news conference on Feb. 27. In 2011, Alabama began screening every baby at birth for 29 treatable metabolic and functional disorders as recommended by the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services and endorsed by the March of Dimes and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

“The March of Dimes applauds the leadership of the State Health Officer and the State Committee of Public Health, and the dedication of the Newborn Screening Program (NBS) for making Alabama a national leader in newborn screening. The expertise of the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories is vital in ensuring appropriate testing is available to screen for treatable conditions immediately after birth which can mean the difference between a healthy life, a severe disability, or even death for a newborn. Tragedy can be avoided by quickly identifying a problem and providing the necessary follow-up and medical treatment which brings immeasurable relief to the families of the 60,000 babies born in Alabama every year,” said Melanie Mooney, March of Dimes state director.

As a member of the NBS State Advisory Committee, the March of Dimes volunteers as advocates for Alabama’s children and families. “It is gratifying to participate with the members of this committee and to be part of this collaborative effort. The health of children was and is front and center,” said Mooney.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, “I am honored to accept this award which would not have been possible without the commitment of my staff and our partners. Our combined efforts have resulted in the identification of children at risk for metabolic or genetic diseases so that they can reach their full potential.”

The Bureau of Clinical Laboratories is the sole provider for the blood analysis for the initial newborn screen. In 2011, 209 infants in Alabama were diagnosed with metabolic or other inherited disorders. The program works in partnership with specialists throughout the state to ensure all babies identified with abnormal results receive appropriate follow-up.

Supporters Work for Heart Health

On Feb. 14 the Bureau of Professional and Support Services Office of Minority Health partnered with the Healthy Lifestyles Branch to sponsor an event in the RSA Tower as a part of the Million Hearts Campaign to improve heart health. The event featured the ABCS of Heart Attack and a Caregiver’s Perspective, as well as survivors’ stories. Shown left to right are Johnette Adams, Dechelle Merritt, Monique Wilson of the American Heart Association, State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson, Julia Sosa and Elana Parker Merriweather, Office of Minority Health.

Related activities show on page 8.
efficiency. There is also an evolving interest in lowering concentrations of contaminants, making the availability of supporting quality control data important. Electronic data is also capable of automated data review.

The BCL is working closely with the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) to assure that Alabama’s efforts are also consistent with national interests to improve interoperability between laboratories. Interoperability allows multiple public environmental laboratories to network and support each other. Utilizing standardized data exchange, APHL seeks to build an environmental public health laboratory interoperability project (ePHLIP) to network environmental laboratories, similar to the existing infectious disease laboratories.

This successful application also reflects the importance of a strong partnership between the laboratory leadership, IT leadership and the ADEM’s Division of Drinking Water and Division of Coastal Programs.

BCL employees involved in this project are Dr. Sharon Massingale, project manager and BCL director; Neelima Vundela, programmer analyst; Ron Howard and Darryl Pendergrass, LIMS administrators; and the Environmental Lab team consisting of Carol Dorsey, Tracy Graham, Wayne Hall, Keith Higginbotham, Jamie Hodges, Ann Johnston, Angela Rudolph, Drew Sheehan, Angelica Webb and Marian Woodman.

For business functionality, IT assembled other necessary support such as LIMS vendor support.

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**Commendations**

If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee’s supervisor and a copy by e-mail to arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee’s name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

Glenda Adams  
Center for Health Statistics  
*from Mark A. Humphreys MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.*

Sandra Blakely  
Ron Davis  
Video Communications and Distance Learning  
*from Sherry Bradley Montgomery, Ala.*

Jill Brewer  
Brenda Brugh  
LaTarsha Shine  
Center for Health Statistics  
*from Marie Hughes PHA 10*

Marie Carastro  
Roxanne Isom  
Teresa Latham  
Beverly Morgan  
Jackie Wray  
Bureau of Health Provider Standards  
*from Chris Cockrell, LNHA, MHA Mobile, Ala.*

Ron Davis  
Nick Moss  
Michael Smith  
Kristie Steyer  
Video Communications and Distance Learning  
*from Tim Hatch Montgomery, Ala.*

Krista Dyess, L.B.S.W.  
Evone Kilpatrick, L.B.S.W.  
Angela Parker, L.G.S.W.  
Charlyne White, R.N.  
Bureau of Health Provider Standards  
*from Mark Manning Brewton, Ala.*

Tanya Haynes  
Center for Health Statistics  
*from Nina Segars Dale County Health Department*

Nicole Henderson and Mable Jordan  
Center for Health Statistics  
*from Kathy Rosenow Hamilton, Ohio*

Gene Hill  
Information Technology  
*from Debra Robbins Montgomery, Ala.*

Atanu Guha  
Jayashree Jagannathan  
Quincy Leonard  
Information Technology  
*from Sherry Bradley Montgomery, Ala.*

Samille Jackson  
Health Promotion and Chronic Disease  
*from Helen Carroll Montgomery, Ala.*

Theresa Mulkey  
Center for Health Statistics  
*from Helen S. Fouche’ Nashville, Tenn.*

The Alabama Department of Public Health Office of Minority Health supports the efforts of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and community partners to address health disparities.

Health disparities are health differences linked with social, economic and environmental obstacles to health and a clean environment. These obstacles are based on individuals' racial or ethnic group, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, mental health, cognitive, sensory or physical disability, sexual orientation, geographic location, or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

“Underlying issues such as lifestyle behaviors, delayed care, trust between patient and provider, plus other factors such as education and physician shortages can mean shorter life expectancy, decreased quality of life, and loss of economic opportunities,” said Elana Parker Merriweather of the Office of Minority Health.

Multicultural groups in Alabama that are and have been impacted by health disparities include Hispanic/Latino, African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Asian/Pacific Islander.

Goals are to reduce or eliminate the health disparities with regard to the following adverse health outcomes:

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Diabetes
- Mental health
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Infant mortality

“We want to challenge all individuals to adopt lifestyles that encourage physical activity, promote weight loss for those who are obese/overweight, and reduce smoking,” Ms. Merriweather said. “We urge communities to get involved in this effort to reduce health disparities.”

The State Office of Minority Health sponsored minority health month events, including a professional development workshop and ongoing training addressing minority health issues. The office will present a satellite conference and webcast titled “Bullying and Mental Health in Children and Adolescents” for professionals and others on April 27 from 9-10:30 a.m. central time. Among the discussion topics will be the impact of bullying on minority youth.

Have you thought about what you can do in your community? To register for the satellite conference and webcast, go to www.adph.org/alphtn.

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of the State Office of Minority Health, established in the Alabama Department of Public Health in 1991, is to improve the health status of minority populations, improve access to quality health care services, promote minority presence and participation in health planning and policy formation, and promote public awareness of the health care needs in minority communities. For more information on health disparities, visit adph.org/minorityhealth.

Journal of Pediatrics Article Describes Pediatric Disaster Services after the April 27 Tuscaloosa Tornado

An article titled “The 2011 Tuscaloosa Tornado: Integration of Pediatric Disaster Services into Regional Systems of Care” by Dr. Robert K. Kanter was printed in the Journal of Pediatrics 2012. The journal article describes the integration of pediatric disaster services into regional systems of care.

Katherine Dixon Hert, EMSC program manager, was a liaison who placed Dr. Kanter in contact with professionals at DCH and UAB hospitals and discussed the response from the pediatric standpoint. She was credited in the printed article as a key informant who contributed to this study.

The study describes the integration of pediatric disaster services into regional systems of care after the April 27, 2011, tornado in Tuscaloosa, a community without a pediatric emergency department of pediatric intensive care unit, and with few pediatric subspecialists.

The journal article stated that DCH Regional Medical Center served 800 patients on the night of the tornado, including more than 100 children—20 with critical injuries. No preventable adverse events were identified in the resuscitation and secondary transport phases of care.
Retirees
January
William Buchanan
Program Integrity
March
Frances Bonner
Madison County Health Department
Michael Weber
Public Health Area II
Judy Williams
Talladega County Health Department
Eileen King
Limestone County Health Department
Jeanie Williams
Etowah County Health Department
Bobby White
Calhoun County Health Department

The Bureau of Health Provider Standards honored Administrative Support Assistant Nita M. Nolan on her retirement after more than 35 years of state service.

Mother’s Rooms Available to Breastfeeding Moms

The Bureau of Family Health Services is excited to announce that a second Mother’s Room is now available in the RSA Tower! Mother’s Rooms help mothers continue breastfeeding after they return to work. The rooms are located on the 10th and 13th floors of the RSA Tower.

The rooms include privacy, hospital-grade electric pumps (mothers bring their own attachments that may be provided to them at the hospital) and comfortable chairs. All ADPH employees and others employed in the RSA Tower are welcome to use one of the Mother’s Rooms. If you would like more information or to reserve a designated time, please contact Michell Grainger at (334) 206-2921 or Michell.Grainger@adph.state.al.us.

Owens Receives James H. Baker Exemplar Award

Jason Owens (second from left) of Public Health Area 10 was named the recipient of the James H. Baker Exemplar Award for 2011. He was selected for this award in recognition of his dedication to the protection of Alabama’s health. This dedication is evidenced by his professionalism and personal sacrifice in support of TB control efforts in his area. Presenting the award on behalf of State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson is Dr. William Bailey (right), chairman of the Medical Advisory Council for TB. Also pictured are Scott Jones (left) and Jim Baker, the 40-year TB employee for whom the award is named.
Department Has Successful 2011 State Combined Campaign

In spite of the very difficult economic climate, Alabama Department of Public Health employees once again came through to support worthy charities through the State Combined Campaign (SCC). Contributions were made by 1,611 ADPH merit system employees and 136 non-merit (hourly and contract) employees totaling $75,805.08, which was 105.7 percent of the department’s goal!

“Sincere thanks to all employees who made donations to the many worthy charities,” Lisa Jones, 2011 SCC coordinator said. “Your generosity will make a difference in the lives of so many people.”

Five counties and six central offices reported 100 percent participation among merit system employees (Coosa, Dale, Geneva, Henry and Tallapoosa counties, Administration, Center for Emergency Preparedness, Clinical Laboratories, Environmental Services, Health Statistics and Logistics).

Geneva County was the first county health department to reach 100 percent merit system employee participation and also received contributions from 20 non-merit employees. As the first county to reach 100 percent participation, Geneva County is the winner of the Elaine Grimsley Award. This award was instituted within ADPH in 2007 in honor and memory of Elaine Grimsley of Henry County, who passed away in 2007. Elaine served as the SCC coordinator for Henry County in the 2007 State Combined Campaign. She was determined that Henry County would reach 100 percent participation and be the first county in Area X to do so. Sadly, she passed away without knowing they were not only the first county health department in Area X to achieve 100 percent participation, Geneva was also the first county health department in the state to do so.

“Serving as the department’s coordinator for the 2011 State Combined Campaign was a challenging and rewarding experience,” said Ms. Jones. “I want to express my appreciation to Tim Hatch, the department’s SCC coordinator for 2010, for his guidance and encouragement throughout the campaign. Also, thanks so much to the coordinators and key workers (listed below) in each office --- you did a fabulous job! It would not have been possible to achieve our goal without your hard work in distributing information, collecting contributions, and coming up with fun and innovative fundraising ideas. Some of you were especially enthusiastic and encouraging during the campaign, and I really appreciate it.”

OFFICE COORDINATORS AND KEY WORKERS

Area I
Darlene Aderholt
Susie Frederick
Theresa Gasaway
Nicole Hallmark
Sonja Rogers
Sheila Woods

Area II
Melinda Adams
Patty Alcorn
Treva Clayton
Cindy Daigre
Janice Gohn
Kathie Limbach
Shonda Peebles
Tara Philyaw
Diane West

Area III
Brenda Bridges
Lisa Holifield

Area IV
Shelley Christmas

Area V
Krystal Casey
Kelly Clark
Novellee Dewitt
Dawn Harris
Sheila Keller
Regina Majors
Tanga St. John

Area VI
Rachel Brannock
Renee Jacobs
Dawn Norris
Richard Smith
Robbie Stubbs
Christy Wright

Area VII
Ann Fuller
Natalie Quinney

Area VIII
Lylita Glaze Crayton

Area IX
Casey Grant
Misty Mooney
Kelli Stallworth
Suzanne Terrell
Merita Wiley
Stacy Williamson

Area X
Linda Cantlin
Josephine Forte
Vickie Haynes
Marie Hughes
Kathy Mobley
Brenda Newton
Lisa Owens
Sylvia Pope
Cathy Ward

Central Office and Clinical Lab
Tony Brewer
Rosemary Coggins
Ann Dagostin
Candy Easterling
Shenell Fuller
Robbin Fuqua
Peggy Harrelson
Tara Harriel
Katherine Hert
Yolande Johnson
Winona Lawson
John Lowery
LaTisha McCord
Neil Maryland
Elana Parker Merriweather
Nakema Moss
Drew Nelson
Pete Preston
Fern Shinbaum
Malecia Smith
Linda Snell
Christine Turner
Jemekia Walker
Knoxye Williams

MAY 2012
Dr. Melvin Shipp, Mildred Muhammad to Keynote AlPHA Conference May 10-11

Dr. Melvin Shipp, American Public Health Association president, will deliver the opening keynote address on the topic “Health Disparities and Economic Inequity” at the 56th Annual Alabama Public Health Association Educational Conference May 10-11 at the Wynfrey Hotel at the Riverchase Galleria in Hoover. Dr. Shipp will describe the social determinants of health and their relationship to health disparities, explain income inequality, and discuss relationships between health status and income inequality nationally and internationally.

The awards luncheon speaker will be Mildred D. Muhammad, whose topic will be “Scared Silent: The Ultimate Story of Survival from Trauma.” Her presentation will focus on the facts about the D.C. Sniper case and the feelings associated with trauma and terror during a domestic terror event.

Other highlights will include a three-member panel discussion of health care reform by State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson, UABSOPH Dean Dr. Max Michael, and Teela Carmack, JD, MSW, the department’s Health Policy Director. Understanding the Affordable Care Act can be difficult. This session will focus on the act and will provide an update on the national issues. The session will review some changes that the law will bring, along with progress that is being made in Alabama. The session will explore changes to preventive health services and the impact on the public health system.

Continuing Education is pending for dietitians, nurses and social workers. The Alabama Department of Public Health is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Alabama State Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Centers Commission on Accreditation.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION INFORMATION:
Register online.
Registration $160, Student Registration $80
Go to www.adph.org/extranet.

NON-HEALTH DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES:
Click 2012 AlPHA Registration.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES:
(1) Sign into LCMS using your Username and Password.
(2) Go to Forms Center.
(3) Search for 2012 AlPHA Registration.
Visit alphassoc.org for additional information.

Dr. Mary McIntyre Elected to NASHP Steering Committee

Mary McIntyre, M.D., M.P.H., Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention, has been elected to serve a three-year term on the steering committee of the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP).

Steering committees play an integral role in building and shaping the academy’s annual health policy conference. She is a member of the System Performance and Public Health Committee.

NASHP is an independent academy of state health policymakers dedicated to helping states achieve excellence in health policy and practice. NASHP provides a forum for constructive, nonpartisan work across branches and agencies of state government on critical health issues facing states.

Dr. McIntyre also serves as acting state epidemiologist.

Volunteer Coordinator Charlie Crawford operates a forklift as Emergency Preparedness Social Worker Stephan Mambazo and Lillian Zaworski, social work consultant for the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence, pack emergency preparedness equipment and supplies bound for domestic violence shelters. The project will provide 3,000 domestic violence survivors with basic three-day emergency preparedness kits and educational materials.
May is Asthma Awareness Month. Asthma affects nearly 25 million people of all ages and races, including an estimated 7 million children. Asthma is a chronic disease caused by inflammation of the airways in the lungs. During an asthma attack the muscles around the airways constrict, the lining of the air passages swell, and the lungs produce excess mucus making breathing very difficult.

Symptoms can range from minor to severe and vary from person to person. The most common symptoms are coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath. Other symptoms include: chest tightness or pain, nighttime or early morning coughing or shortness of breath, and bouts of coughing or wheezing that are worsened by a respiratory virus.

There is no cure, but persons with asthma can control the disease by taking medication as prescribed and by avoiding things that can trigger an attack. Asthma medication comes in two types: long-term control medications and quick-relief inhalers. Long-term control medications help promote fewer and milder attacks and quick-relief inhalers are used to control symptoms once they have started.

Triggers are things that can cause asthma symptoms, an episode or attack. Common triggers include the following:

- Pollen
- Second-hand tobacco smoke
- Animal dander
- Mold
- Pests (cockroaches and rodents)
- Dust mites
- Indoor and outdoor air pollutants

Other triggers include:

- Physical activity (exercise-induced asthma)
- Cold air
- High humidity
- Occupational irritants (chemical fumes, gases, or dust)
- Respiratory infections
- Certain medications (such as Beta blockers, aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)
- Strong emotions or stress
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Food allergies

Some asthma triggers are easy to eliminate from the home environment. To reduce exposure to dust mites, wash bed linens weekly in hot water, use mattress and pillow covers, vacuum often, and for children, limit stuffed animals to those that can be washed.

To reduce exposure to pests, remove water and food sources and clean up waste.

If you or your child with asthma has allergies to pets, do not have them in the home or at minimum, do not allow pets in the bedroom.

Not all molds can be removed from a home, but to reduce exposure fix water leaks, maintain humidity level, and clean up visible mold with soap and water.

Asthma can be triggered by second-hand smoke. Make your home and vehicle smoke free.

Use exhaust fans after showering, when using gas stoves, and when working with chemical irritants.

Several programs help with indoor and outdoor air pollutants that benefit our schools and communities and reduce asthma triggers. The Alabama Asthma Program promotes three programs:

**NO IDLING CAMPAIGN**
School buses and vehicles idling their engines outside of a school create outdoor pollutants that can enter the school’s air ventilation system. The No Idling campaign provides signs and education to encourage those drivers to turn off their engine to protect both the environment and the children’s health.

**TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS**
Schools can save money, improve health, and decrease student and staff absenteeism by developing an indoor air quality management program. The Tools for Schools program helps schools identify current problems and develop effective indoor air quality management programs.

**AIR QUALITY FLAG PROGRAM**
The Air Quality Flag program uses color-coded flags to helps students, staff, and the community be prepared to take actions when pollution levels are high.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, two key pollutants can affect asthma: ozone (found in smog) and particulate matter (particle pollution found in haze, smoke, and dust). When ozone and particulate matter levels are high, adults and children with asthma are more likely to have symptoms. Air monitors can detect these levels and the public is notified on the air quality.

For more information, please contact Shanone Medlock, M.P.H., CHES, Asthma Relations Coordinator, Alabama Asthma Program, (334) 206-5640, or shanone.medlock@adph.state.al.us.

*By Shanone Medlock, M.P.H., CHES*
Calendar of Events

**May 2-3**
Third Annual Alabama Rural Health Conference, Marriott Legends at Capitol Hill, Prattville.

**May 7-9**
Select Session from the Weight of the Nation Conference, Washington, D.C.
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

**May 10-11**
Alabama Public Health Association 56th Annual Health Education Conference and Meeting, Wynfrey Hotel, Riverchase Galleria, Hoover.
For more information visit alphasoc.org.

**May 16**
Women, Menopause and Reproductive Health, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.

**May 23**
Caring for Obese Patients in Home Care, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528.

**May 24**
Pediatric Sleep Disorders, noon-2 p.m.
For more information contact Nancy Wooldridge, (205) 939-5498.

**May 30**
Community Management of Geriatric Patients During Disasters, noon-1:30 p.m.
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

**June 7**
The Alabama Public Health Training Center, noon-1:30 p.m.
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-561

**June 13**
Home Health Aide and Attendants Program, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528.

**June 19**
Infection Control, Home Health Nurses Program, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2491.

**June 12**
ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.
Dr. Mary McIntyre Continues Service in a New Capacity

From the time Dr. Mary A. Greene-McIntyre transferred to the department in January, as medical officer she has been dealing with a series of immediate, high visibility concerns such as *Serratia marcescens*, medical needs in tornado response and *E. coli* 0157:H7. As Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. McIntyre takes on new responsibilities over the Bureau of Communicable Disease and the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories, bringing to the position a long background of service to others and a passion for improving the community’s health.

For Dr. McIntyre, (whose nickname is Dr. Mac) a strong work ethic began from a very young age when she and her three sisters worked on their family farm in Oxford, N.C. Not only did they rise at dawn and work until dark doing farm chores, they also helped their aunts and uncles harvest vegetables at their farms nearby. Employed from the age of 14, she received a full scholarship to Winston-Salem State University where she was awarded a B.S. degree in biology magna cum laude. That was where she met her husband, Dr. Julian McIntyre. Both attended medical school at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, and she served a residency in internal medicine at Meharry Hubbard Hospital.

A National Health Service Corps assignment brought them to Montgomery, and for more than 20 years her husband has been an obstetrician/gynecologist with Health Services, Inc. Both of them have become very involved in the community, and the family has made the capital their home.

In 1995 she was awarded an M.P.H. in Health Care Organization and Policy from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health. In 1996 she also received Board Certification in General Preventive Medicine and Public Health from the American Board of Preventive Medicine.

Dr. McIntyre’s employment experience includes work as an emergency room physician in Waverly, Tenn.; primary medical physician at Health Services, Inc., in Montgomery; and medical director and primary care physician at Montgomery Primary Health Care Center and Autauga Family Health Center. In 1997 she was named Associate Medical Director with the Alabama Medicaid Agency and then Medical Director, Clinical Standards and Quality. Her certification/licensure includes her latest management pursuit - a Black Belt in Health Care Quality Improvement. In April she received a Certificate in Six Sigma Green Belt - Healthcare from Villanova University.

For the past 14 years, Dr. McIntyre has been involved in public health programs and has served on many advisory committees. These include Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s National Advisory Committee, “State Action for Oral Health Access,” which she chaired from 2002 to 2006; Coordinating Committee Disability Surveillance; Diabetes Advisory Council (now Alabama Diabetes Network); State Perinatal Advisory

*continued page 15*
Conference Focuses on Improving Status of Women Overall

The Office of Women’s Health hosted its 4th Annual Women’s Health Update at the Bruno Conference Center in Birmingham on Aug. 5. The theme of this year’s program was “Population Health Management: Caring for the Whole Woman.”

Registered nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists and social workers gathered to hear experts discuss topics that would help them to improve the quality of health care provided to women. Dr. Cynthia T. Williams, a nursing leader and Vice President for Clinical Organizational Effectiveness at St. Vincent’s Health System, delivered the keynote address titled “Creating a Culture of Wellness in Women’s Health.”

Participants also attended breakfast sessions on management of obesity, the use of antidepressants in women, medications used to treat metabolic syndrome, and vitamin D supplementation for women.

Drs. Cynthia G. Cortes and Debra P. Whisenant, Associate Professors at the Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing at Samford University, presented the closing session where participants were challenged to think about the status of women from a global perspective and to realize that women in Alabama face some of the very same social, economic and health issues.

The conference concluded with a call for participants to develop a personal and professional plan of advocacy and assistance to promote the overall status of women in Alabama. Participants agreed that through the individual and collective actions of health providers, differences can be made in the lives of Alabama women.

Planning is already underway for the 5th Annual Women’s Health Update that is scheduled for Aug. 3, 2012, in Mobile. More information will soon be available on the Office of Women’s Health website: www.adph.org/owh.

By Jessica Hardy
PRAMS, the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, is a project funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in order to help understand why some babies are born healthy and others are not. Approximately, 1,100 Alabama women are randomly selected to receive a questionnaire, which asks new mothers questions about their behaviors and experiences around the time of their pregnancy. An important topic covered by the PRAMS questionnaire is breastfeeding. In 2009, in Alabama:

- 64.8 percent of mothers reported that they initiated breastfeeding.
- Characteristics of moms who are most likely to breastfeed include the following: older, white, higher educated, married moms whose delivery was not paid for by Medicaid, who had normal birth weight babies.
- Only 23.6 percent of mothers were still breastfeeding two to six months after delivery.
- 35.6 percent of mothers did not attempt to breastfeed their babies.
- The main reasons for not initiating breastfeeding include not liking breastfeeding, not wanting to breastfeed, or taking care of other children.
- The main reasons for not continuing to breastfeed include mother not producing enough milk, the milk not satisfying the baby, or the baby had difficulty latching on.

The Alabama WIC Program provides education and support to help breastfeeding mothers achieve their breastfeeding goals. Earlier this year, the Surgeon General released “The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding” outlining specific steps to support mothers choosing to breastfeed and to identify barriers to breastfeeding. WIC helps remove barriers for mothers returning to work or school by providing education, breastfeeding supplies and breastpumps. Peer support is another recommendation identified in the Surgeon General’s report that is a component of WIC. Peer counselors provide additional encouragement and support to breastfeeding mothers. The WIC Peer Counseling Program is active in 24 sites and expansion continues.

If you have questions about PRAMS contact Izza Afgan, M.P.H., PRAMS grant administrator/project coordinator, Center for Health Statistics, at (334) 206-2689.

If you have breastfeeding questions contact Michell Grainger, M.S.N., R.N.C., IBCLC, state lactation coordinator, Bureau of Family Health Services, at (334) 206-2921.

PRAMS Announces Breastfeeding Data for 2009

J ulia Sosa, M.S., R.D., of the Bureau of Professional and Support Services was honored for her advocacy work in the community during the Eighth Annual Brazos Abiertos Community Festival April 10 in Tuscaloosa. She was presented the Dr. Moseley Hispanic Advocate of the Year Award.

This award is given by the Hispanic Service Providers Coalition to “someone who has demonstrated professional achievement, involvement with the Hispanic/Latino Community and community service.”

The community offered the following words to honor her: “Julia has been working on behalf of the Hispanic/Latino community for over 18 years. She has been an integral part and a founding member of the Hispanic Services Providers, HSP, since its inception in 1998. Julia works within the State Office of Minority Health of the Alabama Department of Public Health. While her main focus is on healthy eating and overall well-being, she also serves as an interpreter, and tireless advocate for all minority groups in Alabama.”

The festival hosted over 300 participants and was supported by 36 sponsors with one to three sponsors in attendance at each display.
PHA III Honors Disease Intervention Specialists

A special day of recognition was set aside to honor the disease intervention specialists (DIS) in PHA III. This annual event took place July 20 at the Tuscaloosa County Health Department. DIS Day started as a potluck luncheon over 10 years ago among the STD staff. It expanded into a two-hour celebration honoring the DIS from Immunization, TB and STD.

The program consisted of a song by Janice Drew, clinic aide, who was accompanied by Cedric Cotton on the keyboard. This is the second year Ms. Drew was able to honor the group with a musical tribute, and it has been requested she return to sing.

Dr. Albert White, Area Health Officer, expressed words of gratitude to the DIS. He stated how much their dedication means to public health. Dr. Mary McIntyre, Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention, also sent accolades to the DIS. She acknowledged the important roles the DIS perform by intervening to prevent diseases.

The theme for this year’s event was patriotic. The menu was a barbecue-style buffet. A banner was ordered which included each DIS picture and her name. A cake was also decorated with a photo of each honoree. Representatives were present from several different disciplines throughout the health department. The celebration ended with games and door prizes.

“This will be a CELEBRATION to remember,” Shawn Powell, event coordinator, said. “We wanted to show our DIS how much we appreciate them for their dedication and hard work for Public Health Area III.”

The planning committee for this event included Ms. Powell, Connie Lightsey, Pam Nix, CaSandria Foster, Emma Morrow, Cynthia Timmons and Shakina Wheeler.

Dallas County Health Department Promotes Healthy Lifestyles by Becoming a Tobacco-free Campus Sept. 1

As a former tobacco user, Jackie Holliday knows how difficult it is to quit smoking and the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Holliday is administrator of the Dallas County Health Department and takes his responsibility to promote healthy behaviors for everyone seriously. Even though the use of tobacco has declined in recent years, it remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States.

That is among the reasons for the transition of the Dallas County Health Department from a smoke-free facility to a tobacco-free campus on Sept. 1. The tobacco-free campus policy prohibits the use of tobacco product anywhere on the Health Department property at all times, including grounds, buildings and vehicles. Cigarette receptacles were removed and parking lot signage installed reminding staff and visitors that the department’s property is tobacco free.

“We want to create a tobacco-free environment,” said Holliday. “Prevention and promoting healthy behaviors are fundamental to our public health mission. With that in mind, and with the support of Dr. Donald Williamson, State Health Officer, I decided to establish the county health department as a tobacco-free campus.”

Administrators and health officials collaborated for more than a year to establish a timeline, survey the opinions of both employees and clients, identify free cessation resources, and develop a custom policy and notification materials to alert the community, clients and employees of the change.

“We surveyed staff and clients and received overwhelming support for the tobacco-free policy,” said Niko Phillips, continued page 13
Fitness Facility Increases Access to Physical Activity in Dallas County

The leaders of one of the largest employers in Dallas County worked with the AL Strategic Alliance for Health to establish an on-site fitness facility to improve employees’ health and well-being. This article describes how the project came about.

International Paper Co. is located in Dallas County and is the world’s largest producer of paper, packaging and forest products. It is also one of the county’s largest employers with over 700 employees. It is located approximately 12 to 15 miles outside of city limits and away from urban opportunities such as access to a fitness center. The ability to exercise before, during, or after work is a challenge for employees. International Paper has been addressing the health and wellness of its employees over the past few years, however, organization leadership wanted to pursue an organized approach to work site wellness that could be evaluated and would be sustainable.

In October, 2007, International Paper partnered with Vaughan Community Health Services to conduct a health fair and provide health screenings to assess employees’ blood pressure, weight, blood glucose and cholesterol. Of the 228 employee screenings conducted, one-fourth had a blood glucose level classification of “Needs Work” and another 49 percent were classified as “Fair.” Additionally, 35 percent had blood pressure levels classified as “Needs Work” and 14 percent had total cholesterol classifications of “Needs Work.” Organization leadership realized they needed to do more to address the health of their employees, but they were unsure of how best to proceed with a strategic plan for organizing, implementing and evaluating progress.

Vaughan Community Health Services and Strategic Alliance for Health staff built a community consortium in Dallas County in 2009. After a comprehensive assessment, the Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (CHANGE) assessment tool, the Dallas County Strategic Alliance for Health Consortium identified work site wellness as a strategy priority. This tool gave members a way to assess and document policies, systems and environmental supports currently in place throughout Dallas County that impact chronic disease. International Paper consistently attends consortium meetings and was identified as a work site in need of technical assistance to continue a more organized effort in pursuing a healthier work site.

The AL Strategic Alliance for Health team identified wellness committees as the intervention to implement. Wellness committees can lead worksite wellness programming with maximum buy-in from all organizational levels of the worksite and share responsibility among committee members for program planning, implementation and evaluation. A worksite wellness committee identifies policy changes needed related to healthy choices. The committee can conduct assessments of existing policies, systems and environmental supports; develop action plans; and implement changes that will create opportunities to be physically active, make healthy eating choices, and avoid or reduce tobacco use. Sustainability was planned for throughout the process of establishing the committee as well as during the identification of initiatives to implement. The Alabama Strategic Alliance for Health Work Site Wellness Toolkit was provided to the committee chairperson at the 2010 DIY Policy Institute as a resource to implement this intervention. The toolkit provides information regarding what a worksite wellness program is, what a worksite wellness committee is, how to establish a wellness committee, sample action plans, and agendas to assist the wellness committee through the first year of implementation. Also included are assessment tools, model policies, suggested activities and educational opportunities, and point-of-decision prompts. Wellness committees can use these tools and resources to engage in interventions to promote healthy lifestyle choices.

As the committee conducted assessments, it became clear that employees desired opportunities to increase physical activity. The committee concluded a fitness center was the best solution for them. The committee began conducting research regarding the best way to create an on-site fitness center. They sought technical assistance from the AL Strategic Alliance for Health senior health educators, who have significant experience with physical activity, worksite wellness, and fitness facilities. They spoke with other stakeholders on the consortium who have implemented worksite wellness programs, as well as sought support from organization leadership, who committed to allocate space and funding for the fitness center.

The renovation of the 1,300 square foot space allocated began in August 2010 and was completed in October 2010. It is accessible from a main hall and the men and women’s locker rooms. The locker rooms have been renovated as well. Commercial grade fitness equipment such as treadmills, elliptical and selectorized weight equipment has been installed. A free weight area and stretching area with mats is provided. This area is available 24 hours per day to International Paper Riverdale Mill employees on their own time and who have signed a Waiver and Release of the facility. Cameras in the fitness center send feed to be monitored in the security guard gate.
A mber spends much of her free time texting her friends and family and always seems to have her cell phone in hand. Now that the 25-year-old is pregnant she enjoys receiving free text messages that remind her about steps she can follow to have a healthier baby. Her friend Jessica, a busy mother of three, also appreciates receiving a text message as she waits in the car pool line at school. The text reminds her that her 6-month-old son needs an immunization.

Through a new service provided through a public-private partnership with mobile phone companies, tips about nutrition, immunization and prevention of birth defects are being sent directly by text messages to the cell phones of pregnant women and new mothers who request the free mobile information service.

Premature births often result in infant deaths and disabilities. Text4baby is a health education program which provides timely and expert advice at no charge. Studies have shown that text messaging is an effective way to reach young women.

Pregnant women and new moms who text “BABY” (or “BEBE” for Spanish) to 511411 will receive weekly text messages, timed to their due date or their baby’s birth date through the baby’s first year. The messages have been developed by government and nonprofit health experts such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the March of Dimes and are supported by partners in the private sector who have waived fees for this important service.

“We are pleased to partner with the text4baby initiative to give pregnant women and new mothers critical information they need so they can take charge of their health and the health of their babies,” said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer.

Infant mortality is an indicator used to describe the health status of communities and states. The United States has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the industrialized world. Each year in the U.S. more than 500,000 babies are born prematurely and an estimated 28,000 children die before their first birthday. A total of 513 infants died in Alabama in their first year of life in 2009.

The Alabama Department of Public Health is participating in the text4baby campaign, and aims to reach 60,000 pregnant women and new mothers throughout the state this year.

For more information about this service to promote maternal and child health, go to www.text4baby.org.

Text4baby Helps Pregnant Women and New Mothers

If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee's supervisor and a copy by e-mail to arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee's name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

Linda Bolding
Center for Health Statistics
from Jordan Dancer
Phoenix, Ariz.

Rachel Durden
Technical Services
from Linda Railey
Eufaula, Ala.

Jonathan Edwards
Cassandra Hawthorne
Cardiovascular Health Branch
from Annette A.
Montgomery, Ala.

Casandra Henderson
Center for Health Statistics
from Hanna Adams
Athens, Ala.

Sharon Jenkins
Immunization Division
from Bonnie-Jean
Hudson, R.N.
Jonesboro, Ga.

Jeff Meank
Health Provider Standards
from Sandra M. Pace
Atlanta, Ga.

Veronica Moore-Whitfield
Center for Health Statistics
from Delia Smith
West, Ph.D.
Fayetteville, Ark.

Theresa Mulkey
from Linda G. Byam Wilmer, Ala.

Melanie Rightmyer, R.N., M.S.N.
Health Promotion and Chronic Disease
from Cynthia Bisbee, Ph.D.
Montgomery, Ala.

Reginald Strickland
Center for Health Statistics
from Kay Alibrandi Wilmington, N.C.
AlPHA Recognizes Outstanding Leaders in Public Health

A labama Department of Public Health employees predominated as the Alabama Public Health Association recognized persons, groups and organizations from across the state who demonstrated exceptional merit during the past year in the field of public health. Awards Chairperson Viki Brant presented plaques to the recipients at the association’s 55th Annual Meeting and Health Education Conference at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel and Spa at the Convention Center May 13.

Ross Allen Hudson, social work director for Public Health Area 2, was named recipient of the Frederick S. Wolf Award, which recognizes an individual who has been active in public health at the local level for more than 10 years. This person selflessly gives back to the community and is efficient, dedicated and professional in delivering public health services.

Nominators said, “This year’s award winner hit the ground running when he began working in public health in 2000. He took a virtually nonexistent Social Work Case Management program and advanced it to a solid program.”

His coworkers, area and state peers, and local staff wrote support letters using descriptive terms such as dedication, organized, understanding and problem solving with the ability to find and connect “niches” in program activities.

“He is a micro and macro thinker – with visions of not only how things need to be but how they can be in the future,” supporters stated. Described as a true leader, he is not afraid to roll up his sleeves and “jump in” where he is needed. His reputation is of producing work that is well thought out and carefully planned. He is viewed as a critical player in helping build successful relationships with the communities and other partners. Coworkers acknowledge that Hudson has enriched their personal and work lives and feel fortunate for the opportunity to work with him.

The D. G. Gill Award is presented to an individual who makes exceptional contributions to benefit Alabama’s public health. This year’s honor was given to William Charles Graves, Ed.D., of the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health. A 28-year veteran of public health, Graves serves as the manager and principal contact for Alabama’s participation in the National Health Service Corps Program. This program provides incentives and facilitates placement of health care workers in the nation’s neediest communities.

Through his leadership in this program Dr. Graves has helped locate hundreds of health care professionals to serve the underserved across the state. Dr. Graves is responsible for ensuring each facility meets the rigid requirements set by the program. He works with hospitals, clinics and private providers who critically need staff to support their work with low income and uninsured residents.

Supporters said, “Having a servant’s attitude was a motivator in Dr. Gill’s career; and therefore important in this award. In the beginning years of his career, he encouraged many young people as a school teacher, and he still serves his church by picking up youngsters in the community on Sunday mornings. That spirit of servant-hood and encouragement has continued and has been seen as he encourages many students to pursue careers in the health care field today.”

Janis Pritchett of the Bureau of Financial Services was named the 2011 recipient of the Virginia Kendrick Award. The Virginia Kendrick Award is presented to an individual who provides notable service to the people of Alabama while serving public health in a supportive role.

Ms. Pritchett has provided notable service in the complex world of finance
One program manager said, “Janis is someone who gives her all to her job and wouldn’t know how to do anything less.” Others described her as “very patient and kind.” She enjoys her time with her husband and two daughters, of whom she is very proud. She also enjoys serving her church with her beautiful voice, singing solos and ministering in the church choir.

Wellness Nutritionist Teresa Fair of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division was chosen as the recipient of the Guy M. Tate Award. She has had an impact on improving the public’s health across the entire spectrum of life from working with children in WIC to providing nursing home consultation.

Supporters said, “She has a very realistic approach to wellness and as a dietitian is quick to add that a healthy lifestyle is much more than the food one eats. She looks at the big picture and tries to help individuals find what they want to change and how best to make those changes.”

Embracing a culture of healthy choices as her natural way of life, Ms. Fair’s letters of support continued as follows: “Whether Teresa is creating fun ways to get employees up and moving or serving as a leader in the dietetic association, she always inspires people to do their best.”

A co-worker wrote, “It is a pleasure to work with a person whose only desire is to make a difference in the lives of everyone she comes in contact with.”

The Guy M. Tate Award is given to a public health employee, group or agency providing outstanding service or contribution. The recipient of this award is to have 10 years experience or less in public health with service promoting and protecting public health in Alabama which goes beyond the daily job assignment.

The Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence recognizes an individual, group or organization that, through excellence in work, has made a significant impact on some aspect of public health in Alabama. Nominees are not required to have a direct affiliation with or represent any specific discipline, group or organization. Rather, they should represent excellence in effort and significant achievement toward the promotion and protection of public health.

This year’s recipient is Thomas E. Moody, M.D., of Birmingham, who is the only person to have received both the Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence and the University of Alabama School of Medicine’s Martha Myers Role Model of the Year Award.

Supporters stated that Dr. Moody’s mission is to assure that every man in Alabama is provided an avenue to be screened for prostate cancer, and he goes the extra mile to do so. Dr. Moody views what he does as his “mission work” and he freely uses his abilities and knowledge to help others. Dr. Moody is described as an amazing man whose commitment and dedication to fight prostate cancer in Alabama is unsurpassed. One of his peers said, “Dr. Moody is a testament to the statement ‘one man can make a difference,’ and he serves as a role model for all of us.”

Dr. Moody is the recipient of numerous awards including the Mary Lou Wright Distinguished Leadership Award presented by U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions for his exceptional public service and dedication in the fight against prostate cancer. The Martha Myers Role Model of the Year award was presented to him in 2009 for his travels across the state raising awareness about prostate cancer.

The Anne M. Smith Public Health Nurse of the Year Award is presented to the nurse who exemplifies the mission of public health nursing in Alabama. Connie Morrow, who has been a public health nurse at the Talladega County Health Department for more than 20 years, is described as a “caring and compassionate nurse who truly believes her calling in this world is to serve and care for others.”

Letters stated, “Connie uses her medical training to help those in the community who cannot help themselves.”
A peer wrote, “Connie’s actions and attitudes have certainly influenced me in my nursing practice. She is the type of nurse I strive to be.”

The recipient of the Ruth O. Harrell Scholarship to the Master of Science in Nursing Program at the University of South Alabama College of Nursing was Sandra Renee Faust and winner of the Ira L. Myers Scholarship to the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health was Sherri L. Davidson, branch manager of the Analysis and Reporting Branch of the Epidemiology Division.

Burell has been Public Health Area 6 Environmental Director since 1987. Letters of support stated, “Truly a man of many talents, his leadership in his community is demonstrated by the many volunteer organizations in which he is a member.” He is active in the Lakeview Baptist Church where he teaches a Sunday School class. He has been an active member of the Gideons International since 1985 and has held numerous positions of leadership throughout his years of membership. He served as AIPHA president in 2005-2006 and was newsletter editor for many years. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Alabama Clean Water Partnership.

Michael A. Jones was an employee of the department for more than 15 years and

Fitness, continued from page 5
area, which is adjacent to the center, for safety. Other items installed are mirrors for monitoring exercise form and a water cooler. Additionally, the space is a tobacco-free space as chewing tobacco is popular among employees.

This intervention will be evaluated based on usage rates documented by employee scanning identification cards. Additionally, as health screens are conducted, data will continue to be collected and monitored. Because of the large number of employees all over the world, the home office is not able to provide data about the health status of employees of a specific work location.

The on-site fitness center represents a policy and environmental change. International Paper adopted a policy stating its commitment to sustaining efforts to improve the health and well-being of their employees. Additionally, the company invested approximately $125,000 in the fitness center. AL Strategic Alliance for Health was able to provide funding for informational posters on how to use the fitness equipment properly as well as items such as resist-a-balls and pairs of one to five pound dumbbells. The wellness committee’s future goals are to incorporate healthier vending machine choices and implement a more restrictive tobacco policy.

By Leslie Knox
Staff Assistant Kathy Vincent, L.C.S.W., is shown with State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson at her retirement reception at the Thompson Mansion June 29. Numerous colleagues, past and present, from throughout the state attended. Ms. Vincent’s many responsibilities included oversight of Alabama’s Children’s Health Insurance Program, the Bureau of Home and Community Services, and the Bureau of Professional and Support Services. In addition to other service, Ms. Vincent served as Dr. Williamson’s assistant for 18 years and retired effective July 1.

Ashvin Parikh

Ashvin K. Parikh, assistant area administrator for Public Health Area 7, retired effective Aug. 1 after 20 years of service. At a reception honoring him on July 27, fellow employees commissioned and presented him a painting of the four new county health department buildings constructed under his leadership. A proclamation from U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell was also read. State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson, left, presents a certificate to him.

Retirees

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<th>June</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bonnie Blue</td>
<td>Ruby Gordon</td>
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<td>Gracie Davis</td>
<td>Dallas County Health Department</td>
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<td>Sumter County</td>
<td>Cynthia Jewell</td>
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<td>Patricia Easley</td>
<td>Virginia Johns</td>
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<td>Shirley Gant</td>
<td>Janet Pope</td>
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<td>Jackson County</td>
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<td>Health Department</td>
<td>Hugh Railey</td>
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<td>Judith Glenn</td>
<td>Food, Milk &amp; Lodging</td>
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<td>Willie Neal</td>
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<td>Pike County</td>
<td>Linda Dubose</td>
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<td>Health Department</td>
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<td>Patricia Pruitt</td>
<td>Virginia Johns</td>
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<td>Patsy Rains</td>
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<td>Public Health Area X</td>
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<td>Sara Bradley</td>
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<td>STD</td>
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<td>Barbara Goodwin</td>
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Virginia Johns retired as deputy director of the Bureau of Communicable Disease after more than 18 years of service. Coworkers, family and friends joined her at her retirement reception June 24 in Montgomery.

Connie Wood, health services administrator, was honored Aug. 25 at the Cullman County Health Department Community Room for her 45 years of public health service.
Online Service Celebrates a Year of Helping Tobacco Users Quit

Tori Howell never thought she could give up cigarettes.

She had quit several times before, but it never lasted long. When she heard a radio ad about a free service offering counseling and medication to help her quit, she was ready to try again.

Six months later, the 50-year-old Fairhope resident is glad she did. She's grateful for the help she received from www.alabamaquitnow.com, Alabama's online site to help those who want to quit tobacco use.

Since the service began one year ago, more than 1,600 Alabamians have registered for its free services, including master's level counseling, a personalized quit plan and four weeks of free nicotine replacement therapy patches for those who are enrolled in the program and are medically eligible.

Howell said she was thankful for the online help. “I tell everyone about it,” she said. “Knowing that someone was checking on me helped,” she said. “This was someone who didn’t know me, but felt the need to know how I was doing.”

In the past, Howell said she had “quit smoking for every reason but the right one.” She finally quit for herself, because “I didn’t want any more stress in my life,” she said. “It’s the best thing I’ve done. I’m never going to smoke again.”

The site is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Tobacco users can log in and begin the counseling process. Anyone can visit the site for information or register to become a member. Members can chat with other users who are quitting at the same time.

While anyone can visit the site, free counseling services and nicotine replacement therapy patches are available to Alabama residents only. Alabamaquitnow.com is funded through the department with a grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

ADPH also offers the Alabama Tobacco Quitline, a phone-based service that provides the same free program to users who prefer to talk to a counselor for help to quit. Callers may dial 1-800-QuitNow (1-800-784-8669) and sign up for phone services. Alabama’s Quitline has been in operation since 2005 and is funded by ADPH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Alabama has one of the highest smoking rates in the nation, said Jim McVay, director of the Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease. More than one in five Alabama adults use tobacco, he said.

“By offering free Internet and telephone services, no one has to leave home or pay for medication to help them quit,” he said. “Plus, you are twice as likely to quit for good if you have help.”

Counselors are available at both services from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Messages left after hours will be returned the next business day. A Spanish-speaking counselor is available, and other languages are available through a translator program for the phone service.

Health care providers can use the referral form on the Alabamaquitnow.com site to refer their patients, or use the form found at www.adph.org/tobacco to refer patients to the telephone service.

For more information about Alabamaquitnow.com or the Alabama Tobacco Quitline, call Julie Hare at (334) 206-3830.

By Julie Hare

Environmental Services Employees Answer Public Inquiries - Mold Problem

QUESTION: We have a bad mold problem in our church. No one seems too concerned about this and they won’t call the Environmental Protection Agency. It’s a bad problem for me because I have COPD. What should I do about this situation?

ANSWER: Mold is not regulated by the state or federal government; there are no standards for mold. You can contact your local or county building code enforcement or permit office and file a complaint report about moisture problems. Mold problems are due to moisture, and building defects such as roof or plumbing leaks must be corrected to eliminate mold.

To make the people aware of the hazards of mold, I recommend you visit www.epa.gov/iaq/mold and download fact sheets and distribute them to the church officials. Meanwhile, and in extreme cases of mold infestation, I also recommend you wear a mask to prevent breathing in mold spores whenever you attend or visit the church.
Satellite Conferences Explore Factors That Play a Role in Health

A satellite conference on May 18, “Woman to Woman: Addressing Social Determinants to Health,” explored how various social determinants affect women and their health. Participants learned about the services provided to women at county health departments in Alabama, and determinants that have an impact upon health. These include income, social convention, and access to resources for underserved women. Evidence-based programs and interventions that promote the health and wellness of women were discussed. Faculty shown, left to right, are Izza Afgan, Sherry George, Kerri Pruitt, Nan Priest and Elana Parker Merriweather.

“The Psychology of Men” satellite program faculty covered some of the medical issues men face and the influences that can prevent them from seeking treatment. Medical and mental health issues that have an impact upon men, reasons men don’t access health care services, and behavioral influences on men’s health care were discussed. Pictured at the June 18 satellite conference are panelists, left to right, Brent Hatcher, Elana Parker Merriweather, Rick Meriwether, Maury West and Drew Nelson.

Materials Available on Safe Use of Acetaminophen

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration launched a national public health campaign called “The Safe Use of Acetaminophen.” This campaign is designed to educate the public about a very common active ingredient, acetaminophen, the dangers if it is misused, and how to use it safely.

Acetaminophen is in more than 600 over-the-counter and prescription pain relievers and fever reducers, cold and flu, allergy, and sleep-aid medicines. Acetaminophen is safe and effective when used as directed. But if you take even a little more than directed, or use more than one medicine that contains acetaminophen, it can cause serious liver injury and may lead to death.

To help inform consumers about how to safely use acetaminophen, FDA has produced the following campaign materials:

- Posters
- Magazine print public service announcements
- Fact sheets
- Daily medicine log
- Brochures
- Point-of-sale information messaging
- Videos
- In-store broadcast announcements
- Radio announcements
- Internet banners
- Internet widgets
- FDA Consumer Update articles

The posters, fact sheets and brochures are available in print and can be ordered at no cost by writing to dpapubs@fda.hhs.gov or calling (301)796-3703. The other products can be downloaded and used as described. Please click this link to reach the campaign’s website:


Or, go the FDA's Acetaminophen homepage, www.fda.gov/acetaminophen, to learn about recent FDA actions. The link called “Consumer Education: Using Acetaminophen and Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs Safely” will take you to the education campaign page.

If you have any questions or comments, please send a note to dpapubs@fda.hhs.gov, or call (301)796-3703.
APhA Foundation Announces Creation of Charlie Thomas Scholarship

Alabama’s first and only state Pharmacy Division director has been honored with the establishment of the Charlie Thomas Scholarship by Phi Lambda Sigma, the national Pharmacy Leadership Society.

The scholarship honors Charles C. Thomas, RPh, FAPhA, for his work in and advocacy for the pharmacy profession and his founding of Phi Lambda Sigma while he was a student at Auburn University. Today the society has continued Thomas’ vision of developing future leaders by expanding its reach to chapters in 98 colleges and schools of pharmacy.

As director of the Pharmacy Division, Thomas’ duties include supervising the Controlled Substances Database in Alabama. In addition, he actively supports and engages in student development by the rotations through ADPH that he coordinates and hosts for intern pharmacists from schools of pharmacy as well as his active participation in pharmacy programs that foster student development.

“The future of health care rests with the students that we mentor today,” Thomas said. “By establishing systems for current students to excel in leadership, we are ensuring that we will have competent, motivated health care professionals for the future.”

Prior to working for the Alabama Department of Public Health, he practiced in community pharmacy for more than 35 years and was the owner of a community pharmacy in Huntsville.

Charlie Thomas

He is a past president of the Alabama Pharmacy Association, Alabama State Board of Pharmacy and Auburn University School of Pharmacy Alumni Association. He is an active member of APhA, having served as Chair of the APhA-APPM Committee, APhA-PAC and on many advisory committees. He received the Phi Lambda Sigma Founder’s Award, NARD Pharmacy Leadership Award, MSD Pharmacy Leadership Award, Alabama Commission on Pharmacy Distinguished Service Award and Birmingham Retail Druggists Service Award. Thomas is an APHA Fellow and recipient of the APhA-ASP Linwood F. Tice Friend of the Academy of Student Pharmacists.

The scholarship will be awarded to a student pharmacist at the 2012 APhA Annual Meeting and Convention in New Orleans. Recipients will be selected for their service and leadership within their community, student groups and APhA-ASP chapter; as well as their commitment to enhance the overall pharmacy profession.

The APhA Foundation is affiliated with the American Pharmacists Association, the national professional society of pharmacists in the U.S. The APhA Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., works to design solutions to medication use problems in America. The APhA Foundation’s mission is to optimize the role of pharmacists in improving people’s health.

Tobacco, continued from page 4

tobacco prevention and control coordinator. “More than 80 percent of the staff and nearly 70 percent of the clients were in support of the tobacco-free initiative.”

Exposure to tobacco smoke – even occasional smoking or secondhand smoke – causes immediate damage to your body that can lead to serious illness, according to U.S. Surgeon General Regina M. Benjamin.

Having a tobacco-free campus protects staff and clients from the dangers of secondhand smoke and encourages others to become tobacco free. “I encourage other worksites to carefully evaluate the advantages of establishing a tobacco-free policy,” said Holliday. “The goal is to support cessation and the subsequent improved health effects that reduce absenteeism and promote increase in production.”

Holliday added that other county health departments in Public Health Area 7 will soon make this same transition. “Health department offices in Choctaw, Hale, Lowndes, Marengo, Perry, Sumter and Wilcox counties will become tobacco-free campuses effective Dec. 1,” he said.

Materials promoting the state’s free resources to help quit tobacco use are available in public waiting areas at the health department. Both the Alabama Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-Quit-Now and the online service, www.alabamaquitnow.com, offer master’s level counselors, an individualized quit plan and four weeks of free nicotine therapy replacement patches to users enrolled in counseling and who are medically eligible.

For more information, contact Niko Phillips, tobacco prevention area coordinator, (334) 877-2876.
Parents Urged To Keep Safety in Mind This Fall

The 2011-2012 school year is here. Parents and students alike are excited about moving on to new grade levels and schools, and new teachers, classrooms and friends. With these great new adventures come concerns about the safety of our youth.

Three areas of increasing concern are traffic injuries, sports injuries and falls. According to recent reports by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, every hour 150 children between birth and age 19 are treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained in motor vehicle crashes. More than half of the 7 million sports and recreation-related injuries that occur each year are sustained by youth between ages 5 and 24. Falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries for all children ages 0 to 19.

The Alabama Department of Public Health asks parents to take these suggested precautions to ensure a safe school year.

**Car Passenger Safety**
- All car occupants should be safely secured in a seatbelt or with a child safety seat.
- All children ages 12 and under should be seated in the back seat of vehicles.
- Be sure to follow all requirements of Alabama's Graduated Driver License (GDL) program.

**School Bus Safety**
- While waiting for the bus, children should take five giant steps back from the curb until the bus has stopped completely.
- Remind children to stay seated at all times and keep head, arms and hands inside the bus.
- Be careful that clothing, book bags and key rings don't get caught in the handrails or doors.
- When getting off the bus, children should walk to the closest sidewalk or side of the road and take five giant steps away from the bus.
- If something is dropped near the bus, the bus driver should be alerted so that the child can be seen when picking up the dropped item.

**Preventing Football-related Injuries**
- Enroll children in organized teams through schools, community clubs and recreation areas that are properly maintained and committed to injury prevention.
- Ensure child athletes are hydrated with water or sports drinks and appropriately dressed to prevent heat-related injuries or illness.
- Make sure football players understand the rules related to injury prevention and learn to block and tackle without using the head.
- If a player is injured, get medical guidance before returning to practice or play.

**Preventing Injuries in All Sports**
- Children should wear protective gear when playing ALL sports. Gear should include mouth and wrist guards, knee and elbow pads, and a helmet when skating or biking.
- Sports protective equipment should be correctly maintained and in good condition.

**Falls**
- Check to make sure that the playground equipment your child uses is properly designed and maintained and that there is a safe, soft landing surface below.
- Use home safety devices, such as guards on windows, stair gates and guard rails. Children should wear bike helmets any time they are on a bicycle.

For additional injury prevention information visit: www.cdc.gov and www.adph.org/injuryprevention

By Samille Jackson

Volunteer Symposium Draws Interesting Speakers

The 2011 Volunteer Symposium theme was “Responders and Disaster Affected Individuals: Bridging Gaps of Understanding and Misunderstanding.” Mildred Muhammad, Executive Director of After the Trauma, Inc., was one of the excellent speakers at the symposium on June 16 in Montgomery. Ms. Muhammad shared her chilling domestic violence survival story with participants; her former husband and abuser led a murderous rampage that killed 11 people and injured four others in a plan to ultimately murder her. Other renowned speakers included Enterprise High School Principal Rick Rainer, Deborah “Debi” Hall of the National Transportation Safety Board, Robin L. Riggins of the Baldwin County Mental Health Center, and young survivors of the Enterprise High School Tornado and Hurricane Katrina.

By Samille Jackson
Committee; Oral Health Coalition of Alabama; National Governor’s Association State Oral Health Policy Team (now known as Alabama Oral Health Strategic Team); Governor’s Black Belt Action Commission, Health Committee; National Quality Assurance Foundation’s Child Health Advisory Committee; Multi-State Collaboration for Transformation; Alabama Wellness Coalition; Together for Quality (TFQ) Stakeholder Council; Together for Quality Clinical Workgroup; Cardiovascular Health Advisory Council; Alabama Asthma Coalition; Stroke Systems Operations Group; Alabama Healthcare Improvement and Quality Alliance; and Alabama AAPD Head Start Dental Home Initiative State Leadership Team. She has also made numerous presentations and has served on expert panels.

Dr. Tom Miller, Deputy Director for Medical Affairs, said he was delighted to have a physician of Dr. McIntyre’s caliber join our agency. He has known Dr. McIntyre since the early 1990s and has worked with her on many joint efforts and collaborations throughout the years. He said, “You will have to look hard to find a physician with Dr. Mac’s work ethic and commitment to bettering the lives of others.”

In her time in Montgomery, she became familiar with the department, many staff members and public health programs. Reflecting on her career and life, she said, “I have been blessed over the years.” At each stage of her life Dr. McIntyre has worked on a five-year plan that now has brought her to the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Dr. McIntyre added, “I think I fit in here because I’ve been involved in women’s health initiatives and volunteered with the Office of Women’s Health. I am on a planning committee with the Sisterbration organization where the focus is on HIV and AIDS in women of color. I have also served on a health disparities task force.

Looking Beyond Ourselves
Spending a childhood in a home that included extended family, Dr. McIntyre has followed the credo of her family to “look beyond ourselves to others,” and she follows the golden rule. “I try to treat people the way I want them to treat my family members and me, given the same circumstances.”

When the McIntyres were in medical school and during their residencies, a relative whom they lovingly called “Big Mama,” moved from Nashville, Tenn., to help care for their children. This relationship continued, and Big Mama lived in their home in her declining years and they cared for her until her death a few years ago. Now Dr. McIntyre’s mother who has Alzheimer’s disease and needs 24-hour care lives with the family, with the assistance of a sitter who comes in Monday through Friday in the daytime hours. The McIntyres have continued the family tradition with four generations under one roof.

Dr. McIntyre has successfully juggled her time among family, work and community service activities such as teaching health literacy at her church. She is very knowledgeable and supportive of Living Well Alabama and believes in bringing educational pieces alive.

Emerging Issues
In a world of change, the newly appointed assistant state health officer strives to keep up to date on issues on the horizon by participating in conference calls and other means. “Everybody’s trying to see how public health fits into health care reform and what our role will be,” she said. “Another question mark is health exchanges,” Dr. McIntyre said. “We anticipate 500,000 people being insured by Alabama Medicaid who are now uninsured. The majority are low-income adults who have been ineligible for Medicaid. In addition, others will be eligible for insurance through health exchanges. We want to partner and collaborate with the provider community to make sure no patient gets left behind. In public health we provide the critical public health functions that allow providers to perform other services.”

For example, because of federal funding cutbacks some changes are being made out of necessity such as no longer providing tuberculosis screening tests to low-risk individuals such as teachers and students.

“Now the focus is on people in the high-risk categories, and we do contact investigations for the people we need to test and treat,” she said. “We need to educate and work with providers and adjust to provide needed services.”

Challenges and opportunities are ahead in health care reform as well as with laboratory and communicable disease issues. With Dr. McIntyre’s energy and enthusiastic desire to help others, public health in Alabama has a powerful proponent.
Calendar of Events

**September 14**
Mental Health Issues in Underserved Youth and the Aging Population.
For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.

**September 20**
April’s Tornado Fury: Road to Recovery, (Part 1 of 2)
For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.

**September 27**
Infection Control Update for Home Health Aides and Attendants, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528.

**September 28**
HIV in the Rural South, 10 a.m.-noon.
For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.

**October 6**
ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

**October 9**
Treatment of Resistant Hypertension in the African American Population, 9-10 a.m.
For more information contact Ramona Hawkins, (205) 221-9775.

**November 1**
April’s Tornado Fury: The Social Impact on Personal Care and Health Access, Part 2 of 2, 10-11:30 a.m.
For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.

**November 8**
UAB Training Center Program, noon-1:30 p.m.
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

**November 9**
Infection Control Update for ADPH Nurses, 8-9 a.m.
For more information contact Thresa Dix, (334) 206-3377.

**November 10**
Clinical Care Guidelines for Caring for Patients with Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease in the Ambulatory Setting 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Debra Griffin, (334) 206-2066.

**November 15**
ADPH Nurse Practitioner Update, 9-11 a.m.
For more information contact Ramona Hawkins, (205) 221-9775.

**November 16**
Health and Social Disparities in the American Indian Populations, 2-3:30 p.m.
For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.