

Montgomery County Health Department Gets 'Screams and Ink'

When one thinks of "body art," he/she might envision artists' renditions of the human body, spray tans, henna tattoos, or maybe even finger painting. However, when it comes to public health, the term takes on a whole different meaning. As by definition in the Rules for Body Art Practices and Facilities, "body art" is defined as "the practice of physical body adornment using invasive procedures and, for the purpose of these rules, is an inclusive term for any procedures utilizing body piercing, tattooing, cosmetic tattooing, branding and scarification." Facilities that perform such procedures are commonly known as tattoo shops.

There are only six permitted body art facilities licensed for permanent operation within Montgomery County, so you can imagine that it was quite an undertaking to oversee the reviewing, inspecting and permitting process for a "tattoo expo." The year 2011 marked the inaugural "Lost Highway Tattoo Expo," hosted by the business now known as Taylor Made Body Art, which donated a large portion of the proceeds to support the Hank Williams Museum located in downtown Montgomery.

The second annual event, held at the Alacazar Shrine in Montgomery on April 6, 7 and 8, included 17 booths out of which 26 total body art operators represented their own hometown body art facilities and fought for the right to tattoo and pierce incoming patrons. Most of the facilities represented were from Alabama, but there were several from other states - namely Texas and Georgia.

The requirements for a temporary body art operator's permit and facility license from the health department include verification of the operators' training in bloodborne pathogen prevention, providing items for sterile technique (such as gloves, surface sanitizer, alcohol wipes, etc.), providing conveniently located handwashing facilities, equipment sterilization, proper disposal of waste such as needles and gauze, and general cleanliness of each booth. In order to host such an event, the ADPH requires that the expo provide educational classes. Past educational sessions included Red Cross Bloodborne Pathogen

Training, Proper Tattoo Removal, Art History and Art Techniques (for tattooing), Color Portraits and others on tattooing and business operations. Those of us from the Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) involved in the reviewing, inspecting, and permitting process were Cindy Goocher, Leigh Salter, Melanie Boggan, Wes Rogers, Anna Sun and Lauren Lerner.

For the MCHD staff, having been involved in the expo last year, we felt like we were prepared for the event and knew what to expect when it came to the tattoo photos, artwork and live exhibitions. Little did we know...

As a follow-up to last year's suspension performance, the tattoo shop "Screamin' Ink" from Abilene, Texas, showed up to wow spectators. However, this year's show upped the intensity - and we do mean pain intensity.

*Disclaimer: If needles and blood make you squeamish, you may want to cease reading this article any further.

The new spin (or should we say "hang") on the show included a willing and trained volunteer being pierced through the back, hands and legs with giant hooks resembling those used by commercial fisherman and then hoisted into mid-air for a real life marionette display. We envision even Pinocchio in a lot of pain! The volunteer was then pierced through the skin on his back and thighs and swung as if on a children's swing set.

As if that wasn't enough, he was lowered, unhooked, and laid on a bed of nails where a concrete cinder block was broken over his abdomen with a mallet. Within the same show, another trained volunteer and fellow body art operator from the Texas-based shop displayed his tolerance of pain by pulling a full-sized pickup truck using a chain connected to hooks piercing his back (think "World's Strongest Man" but with a lot more pain involved).

These displays of pain tolerance were used to show to what lengths some will go for a rise, figuratively and literally.

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Dr. Donald Williamson Receives ANR Smokefree Indoor Air Challenge Award



State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson, left, looks on as Cynthia Hallet, Executive Director, Americans for Non-Smoker's Rights (ANR), presents Alabama representatives the 2011 ANR Crystal Smokefree Indoor Air Challenge Award. Also pictured at the presentation May 30 at Birmingham's Railroad Park are Ashley Lyerly, second from left, Director of Advocacy, American Lung Association, Plains-Gulf Region, and Ginny Campbell, right, Tobacco Free Alabama President and Government Relations Director, American Cancer Society. The award recognizes states that achieve the greatest number of strong local smokefree laws each year by either passing new ordinances or strengthening existing laws. Alabama tied with California as a smokefree leader. After the award recipients had been announced, the City of Birmingham adopted a strong smokefree ordinance effective June 1.

Photo by Michael Bell

Your Questions on Breastfeeding Answered

How long should I breastfeed?

Six years have passed since the publication of the last policy statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) regarding breastfeeding. In the recent policy revision, the AAP reaffirms its recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for about 6 months, followed by continued breastfeeding as complementary foods are introduced, with continuation of breastfeeding for 1 year or longer as mutually desired by mother and infant.

Source: *Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk* <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/02/22/peds.2011-3552>

Why should I breastfeed?

Research continues to support breastfeeding benefits. Breastfeeding offers a protective relationship reducing risks from respiratory and ear infections, diarrhea and Type 2 diabetes in infants. Research shows that breastfeeding mothers benefit from a decreased risk of breast and ovarian

cancer. Breastfeeding mothers miss fewer days from work because their infants are sick less often.

Source: *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/breastfeeding/calltoactiontosupportbreastfeeding.pdf>

Do mothers have to follow a special diet while breastfeeding?

There are no particular foods that you have to eat or special diet to follow. Try to eat a well-balanced diet with a variety of foods. Breastfeeding mothers should drink enough fluids to satisfy their thirst. Water is a great choice. Most mothers find that they can eat anything they like in moderation. If a mother does find that a food she has eaten seems to make her baby fussy, she can avoid that food.

For more information contact Michell Grainger, MSN, RNC, IBCLC, State Lactation Coordinator, at (334) 206-2921.

Alabama Department of Public Health

Mission

To serve the people of Alabama by assuring conditions in which they can be healthy.

Value Statement

The purpose of the Alabama Department of Public Health is to provide caring, high quality and professional services for the improvement and protection of the public's health through disease prevention and the assurance of public health services to resident and transient populations of the state regardless of social circumstances or the ability to pay.

The Department of Public Health works closely with the community to preserve and protect the public's health and to provide caring quality services.

Alabama's Health

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Asthma Educator and Care Manager Training Available Online At No Charge

One in 12 Alabama residents has asthma. Rates are increasing in women, in some age groups, and are high in minorities.

To meet educational needs for persons interested in improving the care of patients with asthma and improving the abilities of caregivers, a seven-part series has been produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health. The series titled “Becoming an Asthma Educator and Care Manager” is available on the ADPH Public Health Training Network on demand and at no charge.

University of South Alabama Department of Cardiorespiratory Care Professor Tim Op’t Holt, EdD, RRT, AE-C, FAARC, and Senior Instructor and Director of Clinical Education William C. Pruitt, MBA, RRT, AE-C, served as program faculty. Continuing education credits are available for nurses and respiratory therapists until June 9, 2013.

For more information, please visit adph.org/asthma. Program staff encourage interested people to visit the Asthma Program’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/AlabamaAsthmaProgram.

Danny Doyle photo



Asthma program staff (left to right) are Melissa Dean, Dr. Debra Hodges, Aruna Rikhi and Shanone Medlock of the Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease. Staff and coalition members throughout the state are available to speak on asthma, pest management, and indoor and outdoor air quality. The program is actively working toward implementing programs designed to educate and promote indoor and outdoor healthy environments for students in school settings.

Health and Fitness Day Walk Draws Crowd

Hundreds of walkers participated in the Alabama Employee Health and Fitness Day Walk on May 18. Gov. Robert Bentley addressed participants, and health and wellness vendors provided information. The Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, the Governor’s Commission on Physical Fitness, and the Alabama State Employees Insurance Board were sponsors.



The event was designed to encourage walking during the work day as part of a health and fitness routine.

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.

Linda Bolding
Center for Health
Statistics
*from Denise Nance
Oshkosh, Wisc.*

Veronica Moore-Whitfield
Center for Health
Statistics
*from Melvin Vaughn
Travis Air Force Base,
Calif.*

John Ellison
Sandra Gallops
Jeff Ward
Communications and
Health Marketing
*from Stacey Neumann
Montgomery, Ala.*

Cynthia Reese-Lawson
Shelby County Health
Department
from a patient

Crystal Lawrence
Geneva County
Health Department
from a client

Terra Tuck
Center for Health
Statistics
*from Tony Jackson
Atlanta, Ga.*



To finish up the daredevil of a show was none other than “The Human Puzzle Piece,” otherwise known as the Enigma. This human phenomenon has been featured on TV shows, movies and talk shows for his head-to-toe covering in tattooed blue jigsaw-design puzzle pieces. But his looks aren’t the only thing he’s got going for him. His performance, called “Show Devil,” included the swallowing and regurgitation of swords, pool balls and flaming fire sticks.

Needless to say, a “screamin’” good time was had by all.

*By Anna Sun, Food and Lodging Supervisor,
Montgomery County Health Department
Lauren Lerner, Public Health Environmentalist,
Montgomery County Health Department*

Public Health Accreditation May Be in Department’s Future

On June 13 the State Committee of Public Health approved support for the department to begin exploratory activities that may lead to future accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Committee approval was needed to move forward with an accreditation checklist that is a performance measure in the National Public Health Improvement Initiative grant.

Accreditation is defined as the development of a set of standards, a process to measure health department performance against those standards, and a reward or recognition for those health departments that meet the standards. Accreditation through PHAB provides a means for the department to advance quality and performance. Accreditation documents the capacity of the department

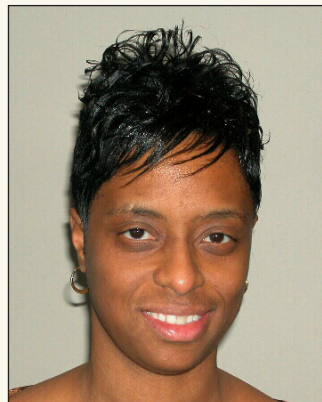
to deliver the three core functions of public health and the Ten Essential Public Health Services.

The Public Health Foundation will sponsor a workshop for bureau directors on July 16 to work toward development of a strategic plan and state health assessment, both of which are prerequisites to accreditation. The Office of Performance Management will also provide training about the three core functions of public health, the Ten Essential Public Health Services, the Affordable Care Act, and quality improvement for employees beginning in late summer.

For more information, contact Valerie Cochran, M.S.N., R.N., NE-BC, Performance Improvement Manager and Assistant State Nursing Director, (334) 206-5226, email valerie.cochran@adph.state.al.us.

Elana Parker Merriweather Recognized

Health Equities Program Manager Elana Parker Merriweather was honored as one of Montgomery’s Top Most Influential Women in the Women of Influence program at a breakfast on May 25. Since 2009, the program sponsored by South East Small Business Magazine has recognized top women professionals “for business acumen, mentoring and community involvement.” The program’s honorees are selected by a judging committee and receive an award at the breakfast attended by business leaders. Ms. Merriweather is with the Office of Minority Health, Bureau of Professional and Support Services.



ALPHA Honors Outstanding Leaders in Public Health

Departmental employees and others were honored 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 public health field. Awards Chairperson Viki Brant presented plaques to the recipients at the association's 56th Annual Meeting and Health Education Conference at the Wynfrey Hotel May 10. Award recipients are as follows.

The Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence in Public Health was established to honor Dr. Myers for his accomplishments by recognizing an individual, group or organization that, through excellence in work, has made a significant impact on some aspect of public health in Alabama.

This year's recipient, the **Coalition for a Healthier Escambia County**, exemplifies the intent of this award. The coalition's mission is to improve the quality of health for the citizens of Escambia County. For 18 years, this group has met on a monthly basis to discuss strategies and actions to address issues that directly impact the overall health of the citizens of Escambia County. The coalition represents a broad array of agencies and individuals, and the agreement that "no one cares who gets the credit" has contributed to the amazing accomplishments achieved by this



Pictured, left to right, are Viki Brant, Ricky Elliott, Tina Findley, Dr. Marsha Raulerson, Dr. Dan Raulerson, Ruth Harrell, Jamie Manning, Phyllis Redmon and Sheryl Vickery.

inclusive yet somewhat informally organized group.

"The coalition has been bold and taken on issues such as crime, literacy, emergency medical services, nutrition, and medication availability," Ms. Brant said. Some of the accomplishments of the coalition include fluoridation of public water systems in Escambia County, increasing access to health care for children and pregnant women through the Wheels of Wellness van, and most recently, persuading the City of Brewton to turn the vacated Brewton Middle School into a community center where exercise classes can be made available to the community along with many other valuable resources. Through their combined and dedicated efforts, the coalition will continue to fight to lower infant mortality rates, reduce obesity, promote healthy lifestyles, and improve the quality of life and public health in Escambia County.

The D.G. Gill Award is intended to honor an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to public health in Alabama. This year's winner of the Gill award, **Dale Quinney**, has given over 26 years of public service to the citizens of Alabama. Quinney received degrees from the University of Alabama and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He received the Ira L. Myers Scholarship to pursue public health studies in 1990, and in 1999



Dale Quinney and Viki Brant

was awarded the Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence in Public Health. Retired from the Alabama Department of Public Health after serving for 14 years in the Center for Health Statistics, Quinney continues to be involved in public health at many levels. Currently, he serves as the executive director of the Alabama Rural Health Association along with giving part-time service to the Alabama Office of Primary Care and Rural Health. He also provides consultation and evaluation services related to health care for many entities. Quinney is also known for his many health statistics publications and his devotion to advocating for the needs of the state's rural residents. Quinney is reported as being instrumental in establishing a viable voice for rural health in Alabama. A close colleague described him as "the consummate professional and a champion for making life better for the citizens of Alabama."

The Frederick S. Wolf Award recognizes an individual who has been active in public health at the local level and who has demonstrated efficiency, dedication and professionalism in delivery of public health services, and who has provided unselfish community services in areas unrelated to public health. This year's award winner, **Tim Hatch**, now works for the Center for Emergency Preparedness of the Alabama Department of Public Health, but began his public health service career almost 17 years ago as an environmentalist at the Montgomery County Health Department. As a veteran of environmental health, Hatch has made it his goal to learn all he can about the environmental impacts on human health. Even though his latest career position has taken him out of the Bureau of Environmental Services, he is learning the value of environmental health as related to disaster preparedness and response.

In addition to his work at the health department, Hatch served

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ALPHA, continued from page 5

as the president of the Alabama Environmental Health Association in 2007-2008 and served on the board for eight years. Currently, he serves as an adjunct instructor for FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness and supports ALPHA by chairing the Bylaws Committee and is the 2012-2013 vice president. Ms. Brant said, "Co-workers and colleagues agree that Hatch is energetic about his work and works tirelessly to ensure success at whatever task is given to him."



Tim Hatch and Viki Brant

Hatch received his bachelor's degree from Auburn University and a Master of Public Administration degree from Auburn University Montgomery. Outside of work, he is a husband, father and deacon at his local church. He also enjoys traveling and is an avid hunter and follower of the Auburn Tigers.

The Virginia Kendrick Award recognizes individuals who have provided notable service to the people of Alabama while serving in a supporting role in the field of public health. This year's recipient, **Sandra Blakely**, has provided notable service in the Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease and to public health workers across the state and the country for the past 20 years. She is a wife, mother and devoted family member.



Sandra Blakely

Support letters for her nomination state that Ms. Blakely "provides the highest level of customer service as she assists in coordinating local, state or national training programs." She is also described as being "astute and perceptive in foreseeing issues and handles the tasks given her with efficiency and professionalism." Ms. Blakely's co-workers admit that her enthusiasm and excellence has been instrumental in building the successful reputation of the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Ms. Brant said, "Ms. Blakely encompasses all the qualities one desires in an employee, a co-worker and a friend. It is apparent to all who work with Sandra that she truly enjoys her work and the people with whom she works. Her dependability, adaptability and humbleness of character are the qualities which make her deserving of such an honor as the recipient of the Virginia Kendrick Award."

The Guy M. Tate Award is presented annually to a public health employee, group or agency with 10 years or less tenure in public health for outstanding current or recent service or contribution to public health. The service should be beyond the job assignment and be one which promotes and protects public health.

This year's recipient, **Samarria Dunson**, has had a substantial impact on the health and safety of Alabama's citizens as she carries out her duties in the Office of General Counsel of the Alabama Department of Public Health. In her current position, she serves as the HIPAA Officer for the department as well as managing cases for Certified Nursing Assistants, unlicensed facilities and vital statistics.



Sammaria Dunson and Viki Brant

Ms. Dunson is not only a dedicated ADPH employee, but she is also dedicated to helping others by supporting multiple organizations focusing on the improvement of the citizens of Alabama. Recently, Ms. Dunson assisted the Montgomery County Bar Association with raising \$37,500 for One Place Family Justice Center, a comprehensive service and support center which provides safety, access to services, and confidentiality for victims of domestic violence.

Ms. Dunson received her bachelor's and law degrees from the University of Alabama. She is a wife, mother and devoted family member. She is also involved in numerous professional and civic organizations.

The recipient of the Anne M. Smith Public Health Nurse of the Year Award must exemplify the mission of public health nursing in Alabama which is "to assure conditions in which individuals, families and communities can be healthy utilizing the unique expertise of public health nurses to

assess, plan and implement programs which promote health and prevent disease.” Those working closely with this year’s award recipient, **Valerie Cochran**, feel that she exemplifies this mission and serves as an excellent example of public health nursing.



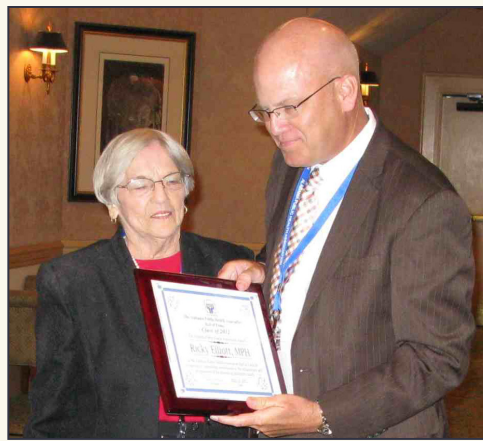
Valerie Cochran

Ms. Cochran has been a public health nurse for 24 years and demonstrates the characteristics of a nurse leader every day. She is known nationally for her nursing expertise and exhibits not only knowledge, but concern for both patients and staff. Her colleagues describe her as passionate about nursing and nursing education. She is also innovative in her support and participation in public health services and has the ability to “focus on the task at hand without losing sight of the big picture.”

Ms. Cochran is involved in numerous organizations and has served on the board of the Alabama Public Health Association since 2007. Recently, she was honored as the 2012 Distinguished Nursing Alumni from the Auburn University Montgomery School of Nursing.

Inducted into the Class of 2012 of the ALPHA Hall of Fame were **Ricky Elliott** and **Dr. Max Michael**.

Elliott has been an active member of ALPHA since the beginning of his public health career and has supported the association by his commitment of time and dedication to the mission of the organization. He has not only



Ruth Harrell and Ricky Elliott

supported ALPHA himself but as an administrator in the department he has supported attendance and active participation by other employees. His dedication to the association can be further demonstrated by the many roles of leadership to which he has been elected by his peers, including ALPHA vice president, president-elect and president, and his service in other capacities. He was awarded the Ira L. Myers Scholarship to the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health for two years as he worked to increase his fund of knowledge further preparing him to provide the level of management needed to advance within the field of public health.

Dr. Michael has served as an active participant of the ALPHA board for more than a decade and has done a great deal to assure the stability of the members of the association as beneficiaries of scholarship funds. He has been an avid supporter of the educational programs as well as the annual conferences, having served frequently as a program presenter. His reputation as a public health professional at the state and national level has placed him in a position to be recognized often by various awards and honors. His dedicated commitment to ALPHA is demonstrated by his continued support and willingness to serve the membership in various ways each year. His continued direction at the UAB School of Public Health has provided a very high quality of leadership



Ruth Harrell and Dr. Max Michael

and has allowed the members of the association to pursue advanced degrees while continuing to perform their work-related duties. He is truly a public health professional who has dedicated himself to the advancement of ALPHA, making him highly qualified for induction to the Hall of Fame.

The Ira L. Myers Scholarship is awarded annually to a student who is a candidate for a Master’s or Doctorate of Public Health degree at the School of Public Health at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The scholarship is given in memory of Ira L. Myers, M.D., M.P.H., who served as the State Health Officer of Alabama for 23 years.

This year’s recipient is **Evan Floyd**. He is currently pursuing his Doctorate of Public Health with a strong interest in industrial hygiene. While his main project is developing a new sampling method using carbon nanotubes, he took time to participate in an exploratory sampling trip following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Floyd is described by his professor as having high professional ethics, being a dedicated father and community member and a future leader in the field of industrial hygiene. He is already noted to have presented at national conferences as well as the ALPHA conference last year.

National Clinical Laboratory Professionals Week



Bureau of Clinical Laboratories staff members collected donations of food for the Montgomery Area Food Bank and pet supplies for a local humane society. A blood drive was also conducted onsite on April 25.



Door prize drawings, such as this one in which an Auburn University back-scratcher was won, added to the fun.



Lab employees who purchased and donned T-shirts are shown at the building entrance on "Feelin' Lab-tastic Friday." In addition, Gov. Robert Bentley, Mobile Mayor Sam Jones and Montgomery Mayor Todd Strange each signed official proclamations for the week of April 24-27.



Spirited and fun events for National Clinical Laboratory Professionals Week included field games on Friday, and a guessing game where photos of employees' noses were displayed and staff guessed the identities of the people to match the noses. Special days included Team Colors Day, Wacky Tacky Wednesday and Hat Day.

Webcast Raises Awareness of Bullying

The Office of Minority Health offered a webcast program on bullying in today's society. The program was intended to raise awareness around the impact of bullying on mental health issues in children and adolescents. Information was provided on signs and symptoms, characteristics of bullying perpetrators and survivors, and types of bullying including texting, sexting and cyberbullying. Speakers also provided tips on how to address bullying in their schools, churches and communities. Pictured from left to right are Dr. Debra Hodges, Melanie Beasley of the Family Sunshine Center, Elana Parker Merriweather and Julia Sosa.



Skin Cancer Booth a Success at Mobile Bay LPGA Classic

The Alabama Comprehensive Cancer Control Program participated in a skin cancer awareness booth April 27-29 at the Mobile Bay LPGA Classic at the Magnolia Grove Robert Trent Jones golf course in Mobile.

At the booth, staff members Scott Thomas and Bret Stanfield from the ACCCP and Gavin Graf and Erica Anderson from the FITWAY Colorectal Cancer Prevention Program talked with arriving spectators, vendors and tournament staff on ways to prevent skin cancer.

The team brought plenty of educational skin cancer material and free items, including reusable grocery bags and golf towels complete with the Alabama Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition logo. Sunscreen and SPF-15 lip balm, "Red is Not Your Color" fans and golf tees were also popular items at the booth.

Local dermatologist Scott Freeman, M.D., was also on hand Saturday morning to administer free skin cancer screenings to more than 20 attendees who took advantage of this opportunity. Freeman answered questions about skin care issues and

examined those who were concerned about spots on their skin.

Attendees and tournament staff were extremely enthusiastic about the ACCCP's presence and were interested in protection from skin cancer. Some passersby stopped to talk about their experiences with melanoma as well as other types of cancer.

The mother of Lexi Thompson, runner-up in the tournament, stopped by the booth to grab some lip balm and let the staff know that Lexi had attached a "Be Tobacco Free" carabiner to her golf bag.

This year's tournament marks the fifth ACCCP and LPGA partnership at the Magnolia Grove Robert Trent Jones golf course.

By Bret Stanfield



Dr. Scott Freeman (left) of Sunrise Dermatology helped with the skin cancer booth at the Mobile Bay LPGA Classic by administering free skin cancer screenings.



Bureau of Clinical Laboratories Director Sharon Massingale presents a retirement certificate to Craig Wilson upon his retirement following 25 years of service.



Colleagues honored Shellie F. Lyles upon her retirement from the Oral Health Program with 25 years of service. Chris Haag, deputy director of the Bureau of Family Health Services, hands her a retirement certificate as her family looks on.

Retirees

April

Rena Dispennette

Bureau of Clinical Laboratories

Barbara Guyton

Etowah County Health Department

Eugene Hill

Bureau of Information Technology

Gwendolyn Hodges

Baldwin County Health Department

Betty Jowers

Public Health Area VII

Gregory Moors

Madison County Health Department

Cynthia Odom

Washington County Health

Department

May

Marilyn Hollingsworth

Colbert County Health Department

Tonya Hudson

Tallapoosa County Health

Department

Rose Patterson

Etowah County Health Department

Nancy Peters

Marshall County Health

Department

Shirley Provitt

Etowah County Health Department

Betty Thomas

Houston County Health Department

June

Floy Crowley

Macon County Health Department

Jennifer Gray

Montgomery County Health

Department

Barbara Hurst

Bureau of Health Provider

Standards

Alice Lyles

Choctaw County Health

Department

Lynn Phurrough

Talladega County Health

Department

Revonda Stephens

Talladega County Health

Department

Patricia Tidwell

Chilton County Health Department

Fannie Watts

Monroe County Health Department

Trauma Care Telestroke Pilot Project Will Advance Stroke Care

The Alabama Department of Public Health has awarded grants totaling \$55,000 to establish a system to help purchase necessary equipment and training to extend improved stroke care expertise to hospitals in the Montgomery, Prattville and Andalusia areas.

In the pilot project, specialists will use videoconferencing technology to remotely examine the patient, confirm the diagnosis, interpret the brain images, and provide recommendations to the hospital's physicians. The project follows a "hub-and-spoke" model which will be created through a partnership with Baptist Medical Center South in Montgomery as the "hub" and Prattville Baptist Hospital and Andalusia Regional Hospital as the "spokes."

Dr. Steve Suggs, medical director of the Stroke Center at Baptist South, says the telemedicine service will save lives and reduce disability. "The grant monies are being utilized to enable technology that allows hospitals that don't have emergency neurology coverage to treat stroke patients in a timely manner."

Stroke is the leading cause of disability and one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. Alabama has one of the highest stroke mortality rates in the entire country. A conservative cost estimate for one stroke in Alabama is approximately \$140,000, including hospitalization, treatment and rehabilitation.

When treating an acute stroke patient, time is foremost. One of the most important treatments emergency room physicians use is Tissue Plasminogen Activator (tPA), a blood thinner which dissolves artery-clogging blood clots which cause most strokes. TPA may only be administered within three hours (and up to 4.5 hours in certain cases) following onset of stroke symptoms. Effective use of telestroke and timely use of tPA could decrease length of stay, rehabilitation, and nursing home costs.

"This project has the potential to dramatically improve quality of care given to stroke patients by saving precious time and delivering expert neurologic care to patients experiencing stroke symptoms," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer.

Additional benefits include eliminating unnecessary transfers and reducing costs through shorter hospitalizations and providing a more accurate and timely diagnosis.

The public is encouraged to become familiar with the symptoms of stroke, which are as follows:

FAST

Stroke is an emergency. If you are among the millions of Americans who are not yet familiar with the symptoms of stroke, here is a quick and easy way to remember how to recognize a stroke when it happens to someone you know. Remember the word FAST.

F = Facial Weakness

Can the person smile? Has his or her mouth or eyes drooped?

A = Arm Weakness

Can the person raise both arms? Is one arm slightly lower?

S = Speech/Sight Difficulty

Can the person speak or see clearly and understand what you say?

T = Time to Act

Time loss is brain lost. Call 9-1-1.

If a person experiences any of these symptoms or observes them in anyone else, call 9-1-1 at once. Evaluation and therapy are needed to obtain the best possible stroke outcome.

For more information on cardiovascular health, visit adph.org/cvh or <http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG>.



Pictured, left to right, are Melissa Davis, Patty Ashworth, Amy Herrington, Ben Kelley, Jr., Ginger Henry, Dr. Steve Suggs, Dr. Donald Williamson and Dr. Steve Selinsky.

School Personnel Join Scale Back Alabama 2012

Nearly 30,000 persons participated in the 2012 Scale Back Alabama weight-loss competition, and a total of 148,963 pounds were lost. The sixth annual competition was comprised of 514 teams of four persons in which all members lost 10 pounds; 7,649 individuals lost at least 10 pounds.

Molly Killman, M.S., R.D., L.D., assistant director of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, coordinated the Scale Back Alabama Schools Program which targets school personnel. In its third year, Scale Back Schools gives public and private school faculty and staff the opportunity to work in teams to achieve a healthy lifestyle while being a positive role model for their students. Schools that formed five or more teams were eligible to become a Scale Back School. These schools received special recognition and were entered in a separate school drawing for prizes that promote good physical activity and nutrition behaviors for the students.

“The Scale Back Alabama School program is a unique way to teach children about the importance of good health at school through role modeling,” Ms. Killman said. “This year, there were nearly 1,900 teachers, school nurses, administrators, nutrition staff, and others from across the state working to scale back and get healthy!”

Sixty-seven Alabama schools took part in Scale Back Schools in 2012, the third year of the program. The randomly selected 2012 Scale Back Alabama Schools prize winners were Mary B. Austin Elementary School in Mobile and Grantswood Community School in Irondale. These two schools received a physical activity equipment tool kit that will enhance physical activity in their students. This was made possible thanks to the support of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division and the Governor’s Commission on Physical Fitness.

A special feature this year is that participants received encouragement from Biggest Loser contest winners and sisters Olivia Ward and Hannah Curlee. The sisters lost a combined 249 pounds during the competition and now travel the country encouraging Americans to eat less and move more. During the contest, they shared valuable advice with participants through weekly emails that offered health tips and encouragement.

“Mission Slimpossible” from Jefferson County and “Slenderellas” from Tuscaloosa County were voted the team name contest winners.

The 10-week competition for adults was held from January through April. Scale Back Alabama is a joint project of the Alabama Hospital Association, the Alabama Department of Public Health, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama.

The program addresses the problem of obesity in Alabama, as summarized below.

Excerpts from ‘The Cost of Obesity to You’ Fact Sheet

- The Obesity Action Coalition states that there are more than 30 medical conditions that are associated with obesity. The most prevalent obesity-related diseases include: high blood pressure; high cholesterol; diabetes; heart disease; stroke; gallbladder disease; osteoarthritis; sleep apnea and respiratory problems; and some cancers (endometrial, breast and colon).
- ObesityinAmerica.org reports that more than 80 percent of people with Type 2 diabetes, the most common form of the disease, are obese or overweight.
- According to the U.S. Surgeon General, obese individuals have a 50 percent to 100 percent increased risk of premature death from all causes as compared to those with healthy weights.
- Individuals who are obese have 30 percent to 50 percent more chronic medical problems than those who smoke or drink heavily. The effects of obesity are similar to 20 years of aging.
(Roland Sturm, UCLA/RAND Managed Care Center for Psychiatric Disorders, The Effects of Obesity, Smoking and Drinking on Medical Problems and Costs, Health Affairs, March/April 2002.)
- While being overweight and/or obese can negatively impact one’s health, adopting a healthy lifestyle can improve an individual’s chances against sickness and disease.
- According to the U.S. Surgeon General, weight loss, as modest as 5 to 15 percent of total body weight in a person who is overweight or obese, reduces the risk factors for some diseases, particularly heart disease. Weight loss can result in lower blood pressure, lower blood sugar and improved cholesterol levels.



Calendar of Events



July 12

ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.

For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



July 18

Changing Paradigms in Maternal and Child Health: Innovative Lessons from the Life Course, noon-1:30 p.m.

For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



July 25

STD Update 2012, 10 a.m.-noon.

For more information contact Thresa Dix, (334) 206-3377.



August 8

Caring for Obese Patients in Home Care, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528, or Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



August 9

Act Early Alabama: Early Identification of Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Developmental Disabilities, noon-2 p.m.

For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



August 14

Influenza Update for ADPH Staff, 1-2 p.m.

For more information contact Tracey England, (334) 206-2047.



August 23

HIV Expanded Testing at HBCUs, 10:30 a.m.-noon.

For more information contact Brenda Cummings, (334) 206-5364.



August 29

Managing the Obese Patient; Nutrition, Skin and Mobility Issues, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528, or Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



September 11

Smoking Cessation Coverage for Plan First Recipients, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Annie Vosel, (334) 206-2959.



September 12

Home Health Program, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528, or Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



September 19

Healthy Aging in Livable Communities, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.



September 26

Home Health, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528, or Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



October 4

ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.

For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



October 10

Home Health Program, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528, or Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



November 7

Diabetes, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Debra Griffin, (334) 206-2066.



November 8

Home Fit for Living (National Caregivers Month), 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.