

Everyone's Participation Is Needed for Public Health Accreditation

It's no secret. Every Alabama Department of Public Health employee should know the state health department is seeking accreditation, and we're already pursuing this goal within an aggressive time frame. All employees must also know it is important that we not only perform the essential services of public health, but that we document them.

Public health accreditation is defined as

- the development of a set of standards
- a process to measure health department performance against those standards
- a reward or recognition for those health departments that meet the standards

Accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) provides a means for the department to advance quality and performance. The department must show that we comply with the standards and measures set by PHAB. The standards and measures are divided into 12 broad areas known as "domains" that relate directly to the 10 essential services of public health, administration and governance. Accreditation documents the capacity of the department to deliver the range of high quality public health services a department should provide.

National public health department accreditation was launched in 2011. In 2012, the State Committee of Public Health expressed its support for the accreditation process. The Accreditation Leadership Team meets monthly and includes Leads for 12 Domain Workgroups and a Document Review Panel. All are already hard at work in the pre-application phase of this process.

To acquaint employees about what documentation is required for accreditation, David Stone, Education Specialist with PHAB conducted documentation training, "Connecting the Dots—Understanding the Importance of Documentation in Achieving Accreditation," Jan. 23-24 in Montgomery. The Alabama audience was the largest group he had trained on this subject and included health



Three Core Functions and Ten Essential Services of Public Health

department staff from the state, areas, and counties, as well as representatives from the Tennessee Department of Health and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

Pre-application is the first of seven steps in the accreditation process. Future steps will be submission of the department's statement of intent (May 2014), application (April 2015), followed by document selection and submission (September 2015). A site visit is next and will result in an accreditation decision. Reports and reaccreditation will continue to occur, so this is an ongoing process.

Before the department can apply for accreditation, three prerequisites must be completed.

1. For the Community Health Assessment (CHA), data regarding the health status, priorities and community assets in our state will be collected, analyzed, and made available to help improve the public's health.

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Keep Quality Improvement (QI) in the Forefront of Public Health

As the department moves toward accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, quality improvement (QI) becomes increasingly important. QI is a deliberate and defined process that utilizes specific problem-solving tools. When applied in public health, it helps us achieve measurable improvements in health department services or processes.

A second group of public health leaders attended a two-part QI Train-the-Trainer series last fall. The training was supported by funding through Alabama's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Public Health Improvement Initiative (NPHII) cooperative agreement. The Office of Performance Management (OPM) accessed NPHII technical assistance and funds to coordinate the training that was conducted by Public Health Foundation trainers Jack Moran and Sonja Armbruster.

The 45 training participants were members of four public health areas and six Central Office bureau QI teams. Each of the teams learned and used the "Plan-Do-Check-Act" model of QI to begin a mini-project and they developed and delivered a presentation about a QI tool that was assigned to them. The aim of the QI projects ranged from improving processes within a bureau to improving responses to customers and communities.

"The 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' model for QI is relevant in finding out where we are, where we want to be, and figuring out how to get there," Terina Wood, Area 3 Social Work Director, said. "It also lets us know when we have arrived at the point where we want to be."

The trainers commented on the quality of the employees representing ADPH. Ms. Armbruster said, "Everyone brings a high level of commitment and creativity. Clearly, they're energetic, fun and have accurate content. We've been really impressed with their concrete ideas and action steps to realize improvement."

During QI tool presentations, one team used visual props, such as a physical tug of war between Auburn and Alabama fans using a heavy rope, to demonstrate the QI tool known as "Force Field Analysis." The subject was one of interest and provided good hard data to identify forces that support or inhibit an organization from reaching its goals. Another QI team engaged participants in an entertaining and meaningful training exercise of leading a blindfolded person through a "minefield" to demonstrate effective team building principles.

QI and performance management are important processes to help public health employees remain responsive to the needs of our communities and accountable to our stakeholders. These processes are foundational components of the accreditation process. Moran connected QI and accreditation by saying, "A QI Council is required and the teams can serve as coaches."

Carol Heier, Performance Improvement Manager and Accreditation Coordinator, said, "The train-the-trainer model was used for the sessions to help staff learn to use QI in their daily work and to equip them to teach others how to use these valuable tools and techniques."

Participants replying to a survey encouraged others to participate in this type of training.

Jennifer McNeel, Bureau of Information Technology, Central Office Care Coordination QI team, said, "It is a great opportunity to learn useful tools and to make contacts within ADPH."

Kimberly Edwards, Area 8 Social Work Director, Central Office Care Coordination QI team, said, "Sometimes we get lost in the daily grind and become overwhelmed with tasks and unable to see the light at the end of the tunnel. With so many tools to help set goals and chart progress, QI materials take the edge off working harder and teach

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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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Donald E. Williamson, M.D...... State Health Officer

Jim McVay, Dr. P.A...... Director, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease

Arrol Sheehan, M.A...... Editor

Takenya S. Taylor, J.D...... Contributing Editor

Noelle Ahmann Graphic Designer

us how to work smarter.” She concluded, “The quicker we learn that change is inevitable, the better off we will be.”

Cathy Sanderson, clinic supervisor, Lawrence County Health Department of the Area 2 QI team, said she immediately began using the “Cause and Effect” and the “Five Hows” QI tools in solving scheduling issues and made checklists for mass clinics. She has also used the information learned about team meetings and how to have more effective staff meetings.

Ms. Wood summarized, “It’s an eye-opening experience that helps you think about what others do every day and how it relates to what you do. It gives you a better understanding of the whole process, from beginning to end.”

Acknowledgement of funding source:

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Disclaimer:

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Patronya Sanks and Carol Heier were training coordinators of the Office of Performance Management.



Quality Improvement Train-the-Trainer participants from public health areas and the Central Office presented inventive teach-back sessions about QI tools and reports about their mini-QI projects. Shown are some team members from the bureaus of Children’s Health Insurance, Clinical Laboratories, Family Health Services, Public Health Area 2 and others.



Quality Improvement Train-the-Trainer participants from public health areas and the Central Office presented about the mini-projects they developed. Shown are some team members from the Bureau of Family Health Services, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, and the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories.

Register Now for ALPHA Conference

A full program awaits those who attend the Alabama Public Health Association 58th Annual Meeting and Health Education Conference April 9-11 in Birmingham. The conference, titled “Public Health Partnerships: Working Together Today for a Healthier Tomorrow,” will be held during Public Health Week.

ALPHA will be meeting jointly with the Alabama Environmental Health Association, the Southern Health Association, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health (UABSOPH). This collaboration will provide many opportunities to meet with everyone from energetic students aspiring to work in public health to seasoned public health professionals. A lively keynote speech by Diana Jordan will be followed by an evening awards banquet on Wednesday at the DoubleTree by Hilton.

Attendees will have a chance to meet with UABSOPH undergraduate and graduate students and faculty on their “home ground” on Thursday. The day will begin at the Ryals Public Health Building with a breakfast for those who have preregistered, followed by a host of workshops on the campus during the morning and afternoon, a poster session for the school’s Public Health Research Day, a “Wicked Problem Case Competition” for students to provide answers to a public health-oriented case, capped off by the KoronisFest/ALPHA reception Thursday evening.

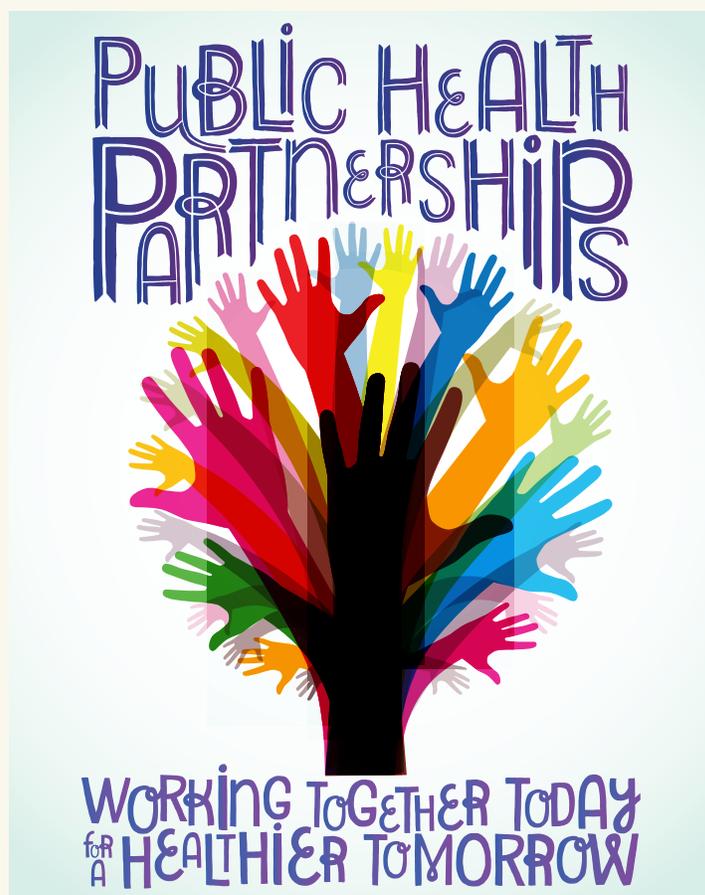
Interesting environmental health topics offered will include the work of the Madison County Health Department Vector Control Division, using GIS and mapping, health aspects of collaborative efforts as demonstrated in the 2012 Democratic National Convention and the 2013 Super Bowl, and food safety concerns in the brewing of beer. A representative of Drug Task Force Birmingham will give guidance concerning drug abuse.

Timely workshop topics include the implications of an aging population on public health, the “hunger paradox,” family acceptance in support of LGBTQ youth and families, disease surveillance for special events and conventions, an introduction to autism spectrum disorders, maternal and child health issues in disaster preparedness and

response, current experiences in TB control, the challenges of working with diverse families, improving the quantity, diversity, distribution and quality of Alabama’s health care workforce, outbreak investigations by public health, and public health accreditation.

Preregister by March 31 at www.alphassoc.org. Select the heading “Conferences” and you will see “Registration.” Select “Registration” and complete the requested fields. You will receive an email confirmation once you have completed your registration. ADPH employees must enter their funding source code and cost center on the registration screen.

For more information contact Shelia Puckett, ALPHA Association Director, P.O. Box 990, Montgomery, AL 36101, Email alpublichealthass@gmail.com, (334) 399-3249.



Bullock County Health Department Promotes Services

The Bullock County Health Department in Union Springs held an open house on March 14 to showcase its services. Among those attending were Public Health Area 8 Assistant Administrator Connie King and Assistant State Health Officer for Family Health Services Dr. Grace Thomas.

An article in the Union Springs Herald lists the multiple services offered in the clinical, environmental, home health, and life care areas. The article also includes the hours of operation, the location, and a full-color photograph of staff and attendees at the event which had been advertised to the public.

Angel Cook Honored as Public Health Social Worker of the Year

Angel Cook of the Cullman County Health Department was selected as Public Health Social Worker of the Year for 2014. She was recognized March 7 at the Public Health Social Work Seminar held in Montgomery.

A Public Health Area 2 employee for the past six years and an Alabama Department of Public Health employee for 14 years, Ms. Cook provides social work coverage in multiple counties and programs.

Supporters describe Ms. Cook as “A shining star, who goes above and beyond in every aspect of her work, from paper work to meeting the needs of the patients.” Coworkers said she is “loyal, dependable, trustworthy and always positive” and serves as a role model for those considering social work as a career.

Letters of support stated she is “full of energy and gets a sparkle in her eye when she talks about ‘her patients’ and is ‘a real team player.’” They further say she supports her coworkers when they are facing professional and personal problems. The fight against Alzheimer’s Disease is the main cause to which she is devoted.

Ms. Cook was nominated by her Social Work Manager Terrina Harris, with support letters from Public Health Area 2 Social Work Director Ross Hudson, other leaders from her community, and a former coworker.

This is the first year the seminar has been held since 2008. The event is traditionally held in March, National Social Work Month. Ms. Cook was chosen from an outstanding pool of nominees from across the state. Nominees from other areas were also recognized. They are as follows: Valerie Lockett, Tuscaloosa County; Ashley Milligan, Baldwin County; Joanna Moody, Baldwin County; and Belinda Smith, Hale County.

Public health social workers provide intervention services to help clients discover ways of meeting their needs and preventing future problems. Clients they serve may be children, families, elderly persons, and physically and mentally handicapped adults who have needs.



Shown, left to right, are Terrina Harris, social work manager; Angel Cook; Ross Hudson, area social work director; and Renae Carpenter, state social work director.



Area nominees for Social Worker of the Year 2014 are shown with this year’s recipient, left to right, Angel Cook, Cullman County; Valerie Lockett, Tuscaloosa County; Ashley Milligan, Baldwin County; Belinda Smith, Hale County; and Joanna Moody, Baldwin County.

Environmental Services Q and A - Nail Foils

Food service establishment employees often have questions, including the following one recently sent to our departmental website. A response from the Bureau of Environmental Services follows.

QUESTION: I am a server at a food establishment and I have a question about personnel health codes. I know you can’t wear painted nails, but would my employer get in trouble if I wore the self adhesive foil nail art? This is not the same thing as acrylics. Nail foils are little strips of decorated thin metal that stick to your nails to look like you have really well done painted nails. No paint is

involved, they can be peeled off, and no substances or ingredients from the nail foils could come off into food it. The potential consequences are about the same as having duct tape across the top of your hand with serving. Please let me know as soon as possible. Thank you.

RESPONSE: In the Food and Drug Administration Model Food Code that has been adopted by the Alabama State Board of Health, nail foils are treated the same as painted nails. Food service employees involved in direct food preparation activities would have to wear gloves over decorated or painted nails.

Fewer Alabamians Succumb to Heart Disease and Stroke - 'ABCS' Serve as a Guide to Continuing This Positive Trend

For the past quarter century, we have made remarkable improvements in survival rates for heart disease and stroke in Alabama and the nation, largely thanks to improved medical care. In addition, more people are taking preventive actions, recognizing the signs and symptoms of heart disease and stroke, and getting needed treatment.

Regrettably, many of those at high risk of heart disease do not even know it. I count myself as among that number. On Nov. 20, 2013, I was beginning the noontime exercise class I have taught at the Downtown Montgomery YMCA for a number of years. Without warning, I suddenly collapsed and was unconscious for several minutes before four quick-thinking friends acted to save my life by starting chest compressions and using an AED (automated external defibrillator) which was placed in the gym three years ago to help people like me. After my heart stopping for at least five minutes, I was brought back to life by having the right people use this portable electronic device correctly. Through successful heart bypass surgery and excellent medical care, I have recovered and am back at work.

For many years I had regular medical screenings for high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and elevated blood sugar levels. I engaged in physical activity on a regular basis, didn't smoke or drink alcohol. I was doing some of the right things, but not enough.

In addition to timely treatment, many of the major risk factors for heart attack and stroke can be prevented and controlled. Talk with your health care provider about ways to reduce your risks, such as following the "ABCS" of heart disease and stroke prevention. Many lifestyle choices—

including eating healthy food, exercising regularly, and following your health care professional's instructions about your medications—can protect the health of your heart and brain.

ABCS awareness is part of the Million Hearts campaign—a national initiative to help prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes in the U.S. by 2017. This is what the initials represent:

A = Aspirin Use

Ask your health care provider about taking:

One baby aspirin (81 mg) every day, or

One regular-strength aspirin (325 mg) every other day.

B = Blood Pressure Treatment and Control

Normal blood pressure should be at or below 120/80.

Reduce your sodium consumption. Too much sodium can increase your blood pressure.

People with normal blood pressure have about half of the risk of stroke as those with high blood pressure.

One in three adults has high blood pressure, and half of these individuals do not have their condition under control. High blood pressure is called the "silent killer" because it often has no warning signs or symptoms, and many people don't realize they have it.

C = Cholesterol

Ask your provider about how often to check your cholesterol.



Employees in the RSA Tower joined together in support of National Wear Red Day, Feb. 7.

Normal total cholesterol levels should be below 200.

LDL (bad cholesterol) should be below 100.

Avoid trans fats

High cholesterol affects one in three adults, and two-thirds of these people do not have the condition under control. Half of adults with high cholesterol do not get treatment.

S = Smoking Cessation

Research shows using a quitline with medication increases abstinence rates. Ask your provider about quitting, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW, or visit the Alabama Quitline for more details.

Cigarette smoking greatly increases heart disease risk. If you are a smoker, quit as soon as possible. Also, support smoke-free policies in your community and try to avoid secondhand smoke. Current smokers have a 2 to 4 times increased risk of stroke compared with nonsmokers or those who have quit for more than 10 years.

It is important to commit to a heart healthy lifestyle. By remembering and following your ABCS, you can modify your risk for heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

The Million Hearts campaign brings together communities, health systems, nonprofit organizations, federal agencies and private sector partners from across the country to fight heart disease and stroke. Information on cardiovascular health and a variety of health-related information is also available at www.adph.org.

By Jim McVay, Dr.P.A.



Alabama elected officials and American Heart Association volunteers, including departmental employees and Baptist Health staff, participated in a legislative breakfast Feb. 13.

STAT Now Available to Alabama Nursing Home Staff and Patients

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services awarded a one-year grant to fund Seniors Taking Action Today (STAT), a program to benefit Alabama nursing facility residents. The Alabama Arthritis Program (AIAP) of the Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease designed this training program with guidance from the director of the Bureau of Health Provider Standards, Dr. W. Tom Geary.

STAT provides training both for nursing home employees and facility residents at no cost. Nursing home staff, especially certified nursing assistants (CNAs), will be offered the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program course called AFEP. This is an evidence-based, low-impact physical activity program proven to reduce pain and decrease stiffness. AFEP covers a variety of activities focusing on areas including the following:

- Gentle range-of-motion
- Endurance-building
- Relaxation

Staff will become certified and lead the AFEP courses with the patients. Quality assurance measures have been established to ensure the integrity of the program.

By involving CNAs at certified nursing facilities, the STAT program projects that it will increase the CNA's job satisfaction and resident interaction; therefore, decreasing employee turnover and improving residents' mobility and increasing quality of life.

Within the year, AIAP expects STAT to reach 50 certified nursing facilities, training approximately 750 CNAs to become certified and lead the AFEP courses. Initial online AFEP training courses began in January 2014.

This initiative came about after Dr. Geary announced the availability of federal Civil Monetary Penalty (CMP) funds for those interested in submitting an application. CMPs and State CMPs/fines are imposed by regulatory agencies when facilities do not comply with regulatory standards. States are limited under federal law in how they may use the penalties and fines, and the STAT program operates under these parameters.

Any certified nursing facility within Alabama interested in the STAT program should access the department's website, www.adph.org/arthritis, and may participate by calling Samille Jackson at (334) 206-5658 or Ellen Snipes at (334) 206-2063 to receive a STAT application via email or regular mail.

Retirees

The following departmental employees have retired recently.

November

Tamika Lewis

Center for Health Statistics

December

Rosemary Germany

Talladega County Health Department

Linda Grooms

Russell County Health Department

January

Elizabeth Abernathy

Family Health Services

Bessie Bass

Houston County Health Department

Diane Black

Walker County Health Department

Pamela Brooks

Public Health Area 6

Penny Brothers

Marshall County Health Department

Gloria Calhoun

Emergency Medical Services

Stephanie Davis

Houston County Health Department

Paula Dubose

Escambia County Health Department

Carolyn Duck

Health Provider Standards

Mary Jo Dyer

Clinical Laboratories

Shemika Edwards

Montgomery County Health Department

Carolyn Frierson

Tuscaloosa County Health Department

Janice Gohn

Marshall County Health Department

Marcia Grimes

Tuscaloosa County Health Department

Sharon Gunn

HIV/AIDS Division

Yvette Harper

Etowah County Health Department

Deloris Harrell

Public Health Area 8

Cassandra Hinton

Health Provider Standards

Sherri Dnene Johnson

Public Health Area 9

Eva Kirby

Madison County Health Department

Geraldine McCaulley

Madison County Health Department

Eartha McNeil

Marengo County Health Department

Patsy Motley

Autauga County Health Department

Pamela Nix

Public Health Area 3

Marla Ponders

Madison County Health Department

Beverly Price

Montgomery County Health Department

Kenny Pruett

Etowah County Health Department

Judy Robertson

Marion County Health Department

Angie Rollin-Taylor

Public Health Area 9

Judy Scarbrough

Dallas County Health Department

Lesa Smith

Public Health Area 10

Janice Sparks

Public Health Area 3

Barry Walker

Randolph County Health Department

Jeffery Ward

Health Promotion and Chronic Disease

Benita Ware

Clinical Laboratories

Marilda White

Health Provider Standards

Eric Williams

Home and Community Services

Jane Wishum

Tallapoosa County Health Department

Sheila Woods

Walker County Health Department

February

Connie Behrens

Madison County Health Department

Peggy Blakeney

Public Health Area 10

James Coley

Information Technology

Mary Fairfield

Coffee County Health Department

James Koenig

Family Health Services

Jeff McCool

Environmental Services

Connie Young

Information Technology

Terry Young

St. Clair County Health Department

Accreditation, continued from page 1

2. For the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), the health department and a broad set of community partners will prioritize activities and implement a long-range plan to address issues identified in the CHA.
3. The department's internal Strategic Plan will set forth the department's vision, mission, values, and will include steps to address strategic priorities for the department and portions of the CHIP.

Community involvement from various stakeholders and sectors and documentation of their engagement is very important.

Performance Improvement Manager/Accreditation Coordinator Carol Heier said, "Achieving accreditation

will boost our accountability, credibility, and visibility in our communities and with our stakeholders and funding sources. It will also engage our workforce in continuous efforts to measure performance and improve quality. The support and involvement of our staff and partners are essential elements of the process."

The ADPH website will soon feature public health accreditation. Currently there are links to accreditation documents and materials available in the Document Library. For more information about national public health accreditation, visit the PHAB website at <http://www.phaboard.org/>.

So be ready. There's more to come in future issues.



Education Specialist David Stone conducted documentation training at a January workshop.



Domain workgroups gathered to map their strategies for accreditation.



David Stone provides guidance to the Domain 2 Workgroup.

Acknowledgement of funding source:

These national public health accreditation activities are supported by funds made available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support, under grant number 5U58CD001273-03 - Revised and 5U58CD001273-04.

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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 Staff Sgt. Jonathon Schmitz
England

Noelle Ahmann
Bureau of Health Promotion and
Chronic Disease
from Takenya Taylor
Montgomery, Ala.

Linda Bolding
Center for Health Statistics
from Elizabeth Garcia
East Lansing, Mich.
James Leshore
Worcester, Mass.
Lillie Mae Talison
Stuart, Fla.
Julia Williams
Horton, Ala.

Florine Croxton
Center for Health Statistics
from Clarence and Belinda Brown
Ridgeland, S.C.

Sandra Daniels
Center for Health Statistics
from Wendy Allen
Montgomery, Ala.
Yvonne Malone
Trussville, Ala.

Carol Dorsey
Bill Smith
Mobile Division Laboratory
from Jeffrey Krause
Dauphin Island, Ala.

Lylita Glaze-Crayton
Lee County Health Department
Larry Mace
Bureau of Clinical Laboratories
from Genevieve Moore
Montgomery, Ala.

Evelyn Jackson
Center for Health Statistics
from Peggy Presswood
Acworth, Ga.

Teresa Kilburn
Center for Health Statistics
from Brenda Gatlin
Tampa, Fla.
Jerry Martin
Atlanta, Ga.
Charlie Morrison
Prattville, Ala.
Frances Nance
Homewood, Ala.
Dr. Ralph Samlowski
Birmingham, Ala.
Rosa Shahid
Atlanta, Ga.
Barbara White
Elk Grove, Calif.

Dorene Mitchell
Center for Health Statistics
from Rachel Terry
Owens Cross Roads, Ala.

Teresa Mulkey
Center for Health Statistics
from Maxine Butts
Brewton, Ala.

Michell Oliver
Health Provider Standards
from Tadd McVay
Birmingham, Ala.

Kathie Peters
Center for Health Statistics
from April Brown
Heflin, Ala.

Steve Wood
Wilcox County Health Department
from Sheri Whittington, BSN, RN
Linden, Ala.

Molly Killman Selected 2014 Outstanding Registered Dietitian of the Year

Molly Killman, director of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, was named as the Outstanding Registered Dietitian of the Year at the annual meeting of the Alabama Dietetic Association in Birmingham March 12-14.

Registered dietitians are food and nutrition experts who have met the educational criteria and have the practical experience to take and pass the national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration.

Ms. Killman has been a registered dietitian for 17 years. She earned her undergraduate degree from Auburn University and her master's degree from the University of Alabama. The Outstanding Dietitian of the Year award acknowledges that Ms. Killman is an expert in nutrition and is a leader in the field of dietetics. To be selected for this award, the candidate must have shown leadership in local, state and national organizations.

Ms. Killman met these requirements with her work with a local food bank, various state coalitions, including the Alabama Obesity Task Force, Scale Back Alabama Schools, and service as the past president of the Alabama Dietetic Association. At the national level, Ms. Killman is very active in the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists.

She has served on the board as secretary for three years and is presently on the Governance Committee.

Ms. Killman has worked for public health for the past 12 years. She serves as the state's expert in childhood obesity and the fruit and vegetable consumption contact for the state.



Joining in the celebration are colleagues from the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, shown left to right, Dechelle Merritt, Teresa Fair, recipient Molly Killman, retired Division Director Miriam Gaines and Davis Adams.

Recommendations Provided from Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding provides recommendations and implementation strategies to assist and support mothers in reaching their breastfeeding goals. Some of the recommendations include:

- Help mothers with breastfeeding support after they leave the hospital. The Alabama Breastfeeding Resource Guide is available at adph.org/wic/. This guide provides contact information about breastfeeding support available in local communities including support groups, breastfeeding supplies and lactation consultants.
- Strengthen mother-to-mother support groups. The Alabama WIC Program currently has 28 sites with Peer Counseling Programs. Mothers are contacted at least monthly by a peer counselor to provide breastfeeding information and support prenatally and after delivery.
- Ensure access to services provided by International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs). IBCLCs are health professionals who specialize in the clinical management of breastfeeding.

For information on breastfeeding, contact the State Lactation Coordinator, Michell Grainger, MSN, RNC, IBCLC, WIC Program, (334) 206-2921.

'Biggest Loser' Helps Launch Scale Back Alabama 2014

Gina McDonald, a Birmingham lawyer and a winner in the 2013 Biggest Loser contest, helped kick off the eighth year of Scale Back Alabama Jan. 16.

Scale Back Alabama is a 10-week, statewide weight-loss contest designed to help Alabama fight its battle with obesity by encouraging participants to develop lifelong healthy habits. Eating less and exercising more is emphasized. The program, which is free and targeted to adults 18 and older, primarily focuses on the workplace and utilizes other local organizations as weigh-in sites.

Approximately one-third of all Alabamians are considered obese. Obesity can lead to health problems such as increased risk of diseases, cancer and heart disease, as well as problems with bones and joints. Obesity is also costly, with medical expenses for an obese employee estimated to be 42 percent higher than a person with a healthy weight. The annual health care cost estimate is as high as \$147 billion a year.

"I have fought obesity all of my life," McDonald said. "I couldn't bend down to tie my own shoes. I was just existing before I won the 'life lottery' by being selected from a field of 300,000 applicants to be on the Biggest Loser program."

After losing more than 100 pounds and reversing her Type 2 diabetes, McDonald urges fellow Alabamians to let others know that anything is possible if one sets realistic goals and sticks to them.

McDonald stressed the importance of incorporating exercise into a daily routine, along with healthy eating. "Park farther away and take the stairs," she suggested.

McDonald is continuing to provide health tips to assist participants with their weight loss journey. Visit the Spokesperson page of the Scale Back Alabama website at <http://www.scalebackalabama.com/> to view this helpful information.

Final weigh-ins will be held the week of April 5-11 and the prize winners will be announced April 25. Teresa

Fair, Health Behavior Nutritionist with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, encourages all participants to come to the final weigh-ins. Ms. Fair commented, "Everyone who weighs out is eligible for cash prizes, regardless of the amount of weight lost." Information regarding final weigh-in sites will be available at <http://www.scalebackalabama.com/> toward the end of March.

Scale Back Alabama is sponsored by the Alabama Hospital Association and the Alabama Department of Public Health, with generous underwriting from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama.



Gina McDonald, Esq., provides tips for Scale Back Alabama participants.

SBA Announces 2014 Team Name Contest Winners

This year's Team Name Contest drew more than 2,300 votes. Thanks to everyone for participating, and congratulations to the winners!

Winner: Waddlers to Modelers

Runner-up: Too Much to Twerk

Don't forget final weigh-ins during the week of April 5-11!



Journal Publishes Study by McNees and Morrison

A manuscript co-authored by James McNees, recently retired director of the Office of Radiation Control, and Melissa Morrison, CDC Career Epidemiology Field Officer assigned to ADPH, was published in the January/February 2014 issue of "Biosecurity and Bioterrorism: Biodefense Strategy, Practice, and Science."

The article describes the 2011 investigation in collaboration with CDC and FDA and multiple state health departments to

assess the magnitude and extent of internal contamination with radioactive strontium following Rubidium Rb 82 Cardiac PET Scan. The product had been used at an Alabama facility prior to its recall and the facility cooperated with ADPH Radiation Control and CDC to test its patients that received the product; no evidence of widespread internal contamination was found. The investigation can serve as a model for a rapid and effective federal and state collaboration in radiation-related public health investigations.

Calendar of Events



April 2

Home Care Infection Control and OSHA Update 2014 for Professional Staff, 2-4 p.m.

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



April 3

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

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



April 7

Stopping Violence Before It Occurs: Violence Prevention, Maternal and Child Health, and Public Health

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

April 9-11

Public Health Partnerships: Working Together Today for a Healthier Tomorrow, Alabama Public Health Association 58th Annual Health Education Conference in conjunction with Alabama Environmental Health Association, Southern Health Association, UAB School of Public Health, UAB and DoubleTree Hotel, Birmingham. For more information visit www.alphassoc.org.



April 16

Home Health Paraprofessional Program, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 206-3867.



April 22

Communicable Diseases for Home Health Professionals, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



April 25

Scale Back Alabama 2014-Final Event 10-10:30 a.m.

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



April 30

Pediatric Pulmonary (UAB), noon-2 p.m.

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



May 7

Autism, noon-1:30 p.m.

For more information contact Beth Johns, (205) 934-6786.



May 14

Home Health Paraprofessional Program, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 206-3867



May 21

Disaster Mental Health, 1-3:30 p.m.

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