

Alabama's health

A publication of the Alabama Department of Public Health

BC&L Celebrates National Clinical Laboratory Professionals Week 2010

The State Public Health Laboratory System is part of the first line of defense in detecting diseases, whether caused by natural or terrorist action. The system offers Alabama citizens quality services through a vast array of technical specialties, and is an essential component of the national public health laboratory system.

In recognition of National Clinical Laboratory Professionals Week 2010, employees of the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories planned special activities for each day of the week of April 19-23 to note their vital role in protecting the public's health.

Monday was designated Division Color Day, and employees wore the various colors associated with awareness of different cancers. Tuesday was Hat Day when employees donned handmade and decorated hats, which were later judged and prizes awarded. Wednesday was "Curing Cancer, One Step at a Time Day" with a cancer walk to raise money to donate to Relay for Life. Thursday was Favorite Sports Team Day when employees wore their favorite team attire. The week ended with a barbecue for employees, and numerous certificates of recognition were awarded and door prizes were given.

Director Sharon Massingale noted that the week in 2010 marked the one-year anniversary of the beginning of novel H1N1 in Alabama. Proclamations recognizing the week were also signed by the governor and the mayors of Mobile and Montgomery. A special event this year was a visit by senior students at Brewbaker



Walkers braved the heat and raised more than \$700 at the "Curing Cancer: One Day at a Time" walk to benefit Relay for Life.

Technology Magnet High School, a faculty member from Alabama State University and a student from Auburn University Montgomery. After an orientation which included a viewing of a career recruitment DVD and refreshments, the students broke off into teams to tour the various laboratories.

During the 2009 fiscal year, the system received 837,000 specimens for analysis and performed almost 2 million laboratory tests in furtherance of its overarching mission of leading the state through laboratory science and service while improving and protecting the residents' health from current and future diseases and disasters.

The Bureau began operation in 1908 "to aid the physicians of the state in diagnosing and treating disease, thus materially contributing

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Health Screenings Offered



The Wellness Program offered health screenings at the Alabama Public Health Association Educational Conference April 8-9. Vivian Hinson, left, of the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health said she was pleasantly surprised that her blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol metrics had improved over her screening last year. Emily Pharris, RN, is shown counseling Ms. Hinson. Special early morning and lunch hour screenings are now being offered to employees in the RSA Tower.

Breastfeeding Facts

Did you know:

- The Alabama WIC Program provides breastfeeding education and support?
- Breastfeeding helps provide benefits that last a lifetime?
- Mothers who return to work or school can continue to breastfeed?
- Breastfeeding saves money?

For more information contact Michell Grainger, michell.grainger@adph.state.al.us, (334) 206-2921. A breastfeeding resource guide is also available at www.adph.org/wic.

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.



Retirees

February

Sharyn Cook

Marengo County Health Department

Marcelete Hurtt

Choctaw County Health Department

Elsie Pate

Family Health Services

Peggy Searcy

Public Health Area X

Bessie Sims

Monroe County Health Department

Michelle Williams

Epidemiology

March

Reba Brown

St. Clair County Health Department

Sally Hairston

Pickens County Health Department

E. B. Haskew

Calhoun County Health Department

Susan Riddle

Morgan County Health Department

April

Christopher Gresham

Russell County Health Department

Barbara Little

Public Health Area V

Gloria Marchman

Public Health Area X

Thelma Sorrells

Covington County Health Department

Judy Thompson

Morgan County Health Department

Alabama's Health

Alabama's Health is an official publication of the Alabama Department of Public Health, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease. If you would like to receive the publication or wish to submit information for future articles, please telephone requests to (334) 206-5300. Articles may be reprinted provided credit is given to the Alabama Department of Public Health. The department's Web site is <http://www.adph.org>.

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Noelle Ahmann Graphic Designer

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to the prevention of disease and to the prolongation of life." For more than a century Alabama citizens have depended on the state laboratory "to help maintain a high quality of health and life."

In addition to the central lab in Montgomery, a regional lab is located in Mobile. Divisions are as follows: Chemistry, Microbiology, Quality Management, Respiratory Diseases, Sanitary Bacteriology/Media, Serology, Newborn Screening, Administrative Support Services and Clerical.

Accrediting and certifying agencies are the American Industrial Hygiene Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Planning committee members were Marc Buda, Amerrah Carson (Mobile Lab), Courtney Chestnutt, Laura Crowe, Sondra Edwards, Tracy Graham, Catrina Hollins, Ashley Hubbard, Larry Mace, Dr. Sharon Massingale, Nancy Robinson, and Ann White.



Nearly 100 percent of the laboratory employees participated in the fundraising walk April 21.



In the midst of the week's activities, testing continued as usual. Ann White labels a test tube.



Employee Phyllis Randolph reviews reports.



Supervisor Joanna Roberson labels petri dishes for specimen inoculation.



Michael Huff shows Brew Tech students the Chemical Terrorism lab.



Nicole Moore demonstrates the glovebox in the biosafety level three laboratory (BSL-3) to Brew Tech students.

No Idling Campaign Promotes Healthy Air in Alabama School Zones

A multi-agency campaign takes aim at reducing vehicle emissions near schools by lessening the amount of exhaust from vehicles that are left to idle while waiting to drop off or pick up children in mornings and afternoons. During these times of day, large numbers of school buses and other vehicles are concentrated in a small area around schools. The exhaust from these vehicles can result in an increase in harmful emissions in the air.

Studies have shown that young children are more vulnerable to the health impacts of vehicle emissions than adults. Children breathe 50 percent more air per pound than adults and children are closer to the ground than adults, which puts them closer to the emissions from idling vehicles. In addition, many children suffer from asthma or other respiratory problems, and vehicle emissions can cause an increase in breathing problems for them.

No Idling signs are being strategically posted around schools, thus creating Idle Free Zones. In addition, an awareness campaign has been initiated to inform parents, bus drivers and school administrators of the potential negative health impacts of leaving vehicles idling while waiting in school loading zones. As part of the awareness campaign, parents of school children are able to sign a No Idling Pledge to document their commitment to participating in this effort.

Partnering with the Asthma program of the Healthy Communities Branch of the department in this campaign are the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, the American Lung Association in Alabama, the State Department of Education and the Autauga County School System, which has become one of the first systems in Alabama to begin implementing a No Idling Campaign. To promote this campaign, the Autauga County system hosted a news conference March 23 at Prattville Primary School.

Spokesmen from the three state agencies, Prattville Mayor Jim Byard, Jr., Autauga County Superintendent Greg Faulkner, and State Sen. Mac Gipson spoke at the morning news conference. Dr. Thomas Miller, Assistant State Health Officer for Personal and Community Health, said, "This is a key health issue, and this partnership will make a difference in the lives of children statewide. More than 13 percent of children have asthma and this practice is a 'no brainer' in places where children are concentrated."

Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the airways and lungs of many Alabama citizens, including children. Asthma frequently interrupts daily activities, such as attending school, and causes children to miss many days of school each year. In addition, children

that suffer with asthma are sensitive to pollutants such as those contained in automobile exhaust that can trigger an asthma attack.

In November 2009, the State Board of Education adopted a resolution noting that approximately 7,539 school buses transport 387,000 students to and from schools daily, and emissions from gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles contribute significantly to air quality issues, including greenhouse gases, ozone formation, and fine particulates, and contribute a multitude of potentially harmful pollutants that can trigger an asthma attack and other ailments.

The resolution further noted that reducing idling by 30 minutes per day would save 45 gallons and \$135 per bus per year (assuming a diesel fuel cost of \$3 per gallon) while significantly improving public health, air quality, reducing costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

The green signs posted at schools read "Young Lungs Need Clean Air - No Idling."

Other benefits of adopting this practice are as follows:

- By not idling, you keep three pounds of pollution per month from going into the air.
- You save money! One hour of idling burns up to a gallon of fuel.
- By not idling, you reduce car exhaust and decrease your child's exposure to unhealthy emissions.

For more information on the Alabama Asthma Program, visit <http://www.adph.org/asthma/>.



A news conference highlighted the importance of buses and motorists turning off their engines while waiting to drop off or pick up children. Shown left to right are ADEM Director John Hagood, State Sen. Mac Gipson, SDE Pupil Transportation Director Joe Lightsey, Autauga County School Superintendent Greg Faulkner, Assistant State Health Officer Dr. Tom Miller and Prattville Mayor Jim Byard.

ALPHA Gives Recognition to Outstanding Leaders

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 Chairman David Pettway presented plaques to the recipients at the association's 54th Annual Meeting and Health Education Conference at the Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel and Conference Center at Grand National.

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 **Patty Dart** of Montgomery.

A supporter stated, "As one of two sexual assault nurse examiners in the state, Patty is on call 24/7 to examine victims and help them cope with the traumatic experience. Her kindness and dedication not only put victims and families at ease, but they also make her a tremendous asset to the Standing Together Against Rape Program. Ms. Dart's desire to help victims also led her to volunteer to create a training DVD to educate other professionals on how to properly treat victims of sexual assault."

Pat Mooney of Tallassee was first employed with the Alabama Department of Public Health when Virginia Kendrick was the Alabama Department of Public Health personnel director, and it is fitting that she was named the 2010 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. Mooney worked 44 uninterrupted years with the department until her retirement in January.

Upholding the high standards of integrity set by Mrs. Kendrick, letters of support said Ms. Mooney "was always happy to take on projects, volunteer to help co-workers, or provide guidance. If an employee had a question, Pat, no doubt, had the answer. Her quiet leadership traits are an envy and inspiration to those who follow in her footsteps."

The recipient of the Guy M. Tate Award, **Mark Johnson** of Gadsden, has been characterized as "What public health is all about." Letters of support said, "From spending tireless hours mentoring abused and neglected children to counseling patients and family members on medical, financial and emotional needs – Mark's devotion to people knows no bounds."

During the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, Mark is credited with keeping his area staff and residents calm and panic free. "In that



Award recipients are shown, left to right, Frances Kennamer, John Hankins, Pat Mooney, Mark Johnson, Ashvin Parikh, Patty Dart, Leslie Loyd and Jack Galassini.

time, his leadership and communication skills also brought about new, positive relationships between community and non-profit groups – who now work together for the greater public health good of the area. Colleagues say it's a pleasure working with and for someone whose only desire is to make a difference."

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. Johnson is assistant administrator for Public Health Areas 5 and 6.

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.

Ashvin Parikh 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.

In addition to those adjectives, this year's award recipient, Parikh, is also described as "organized, understanding, and always willing to roll up his sleeves and 'jump in' wherever he's needed."

Part of the public health family since 1986, Parikh is currently the Assistant Area Administrator in Area 7 and is said to be a critical

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player in building successful relationships with residents, town leaders, and other partners in those communities. Those around him say it is all because of his careful planning and dedication but he will tell you he would make the extra effort for any member of his family.

Medical Outreach Ministries of Montgomery has performed a mission worthy of the Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence, having literally built its practice from the ground up. What started as a small group of volunteers in the basement of a church has grown into a fully-staffed clinic serving over 4,000 patients each year.

Health care, pharmaceutical and dental services are provided to citizens between the ages of 19 and 64, who have no health insurance, and an income up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. For these patients, the ministry is their only access to health care and medicine, in fact, \$87,000 in free medications are provided to patients each month.

Medical Outreach Ministries also works with the LIFE Tech program to help female prison parolees transition back into society after mental health and substance abuse treatment. The ministry also partners with various state organizations, schools and physicians to help provide quality care to those in need.

The Anne M. Smith Excellence in Public Health Nursing Award is presented to the nurse who exemplifies the mission of public health nursing in Alabama. This award, formerly presented at the Anne Smith Seminar, was presented at the ALPHA conference for the first time in 2010.

This year's recipient, State Nursing Director **John Hankins** of Montgomery, has been described as someone who brings out the best in others as a mentor, leader and role model. Nominators noted he is "loved statewide for helping nurses practice the way they should – by using and promoting proper standards of care. This is a passion that not only keeps his nurses safe, but ensures patient safety too."

Hankins "works closely with his staff, always has time to answer questions, and is well respected for involving his nurses in the decision making and planning process." Beyond his everyday work, John graciously volunteers his time with other public health and community organizations and continues to advance his nursing education by working on his Ph.D.

Scholarship Recipients

The association presented **Leslie Loyd** of Decatur the Ira L. Myers Scholarship at the University of Alabama at Birmingham where

she is pursuing a Master's of Public Health degree. **Amy Daley** of Philadelphia, Pa., was presented the inaugural Ruth Harrell Scholarship to the Master of Science in Nursing program at the University of South Alabama. Ms. Harrell read a letter of appreciation from Ms. Daley, a nurse who performs considerable a great deal of volunteer work in her home community.

Hall of Fame Class of 2010

Two esteemed veterans of public health were also inducted into the Class of 2010 of the ALPHA Hall of Fame.

Frances Kennamer, former director of the Bureau of Professional and Support Services and current director of public health programs with the UAB School of Public Health, was called "one of the solid rocks upon which the Alabama Public Health Association was grounded."

It was noted that Ms. Kennamer's leadership skills have been demonstrated by the positions she has held, including serving in an advisory capacity at the South Central Public Health Training Center and the South Central Center for Public Health Preparedness. She was an expert liaison to the National Public Health Performance Standards and the Public Health Accreditation Board. She has served on the governing board of both the Alabama Public Health Association and the American Public Health Association.

Co-workers praised the "positive, cheerful attitude" with which Ms. Kennamer approached each job on a daily basis and her interest in the "sustained success and continued growth of ALPHA."

Ashvin K. Parikh, assistant area administrator for Public Health Area 7, was praised for his unselfish service, both to the association and in his community. Supporters praised his "clear enthusiasm" and effectiveness.

As an active member of Selma civic organizations, he was credited with always going above and beyond to serve those in need throughout the region in assuring that sorely needed public health care would be available in several of Alabama's most vulnerable rural counties. Additionally, he has helped build new programs and ensure opportunities for community growth.

A letter of support stated, "With Ashvin the word 'impossible' doesn't exist. He just needs to know there is something to be solved and he finds a way to solve it."

Inaugural DNP Graduates Enhance Their Practices, Aid the Underserved

Public Health Area 3 family nurse practitioners Latoya Wilkins Davis and Cynthia Davis Lewis were awarded their Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees in August 2009. The coworkers were members of the first class of doctoral students to graduate from the DNP program at the University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing.

Their achievements involved a great deal of hard work in intensive programs of study. The new Doctor of Nursing Practice is a practice-focused degree to prepare graduates to practice at the highest level in specialty practice or to assume leadership positions in health care.

Nursing Division Director John Hankins said he especially applauds both of the graduates because they have earned a doctoral degree in advanced nursing practice. Their achievements illustrate that it can be done, and the high positions they hold move the department toward a workforce that appropriately reflects the people we serve in Alabama.

Pamela Moody, PhD, MSN, CRNP, nurse administrator for Public Health Area 3, said she is "extremely proud of them" for being among the first graduates of the program.



Cynthia Lewis

Cynthia Lewis realizes goals

Reaching the highest degree available for clinical nurses is the realization of long-held goals and dreams. Ms. Lewis was born and reared in Greene County, a sparsely populated county where one-third of the population

lives below the poverty level and 80 percent are African American.

As a child at the age of 6 she recalls always wanting to help people in any way she could and wanting to become a nurse. As a teenager she assisted with the care of both of her elderly grandmothers and decided that nursing was the career path on which she wanted to embark.

"The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart, head and hands," Ms. Lewis said. "I feel that any role in a nursing career can improve the world. Growing up in rural community in Greene County, I experienced firsthand the great need for great health care workers. I have always wanted to go back to my roots and help my community. I want to live my life so that when my children think of fairness, caring and integrity, they will think of me."

Reaching her career goal has been a journey sometimes fraught with obstacles. She attended Alabama A& M University and received her bachelor of science in nursing degree from the University of Alabama at Huntsville. After becoming a registered nurse and working in a variety of fields, one of her goals was to come back home to serve her low-income community.

One of her positions was as a home health nurse and supervisor with the Greene County Health Department. After a 10-year career as a registered nurse, she obtained her master's degree in nursing with a focus as a family nurse practitioner. She graduated from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2002. While in graduate school, she joined the Air Force Reserves where she started as a first lieutenant and in her more than 8 years of service she has been promoted to the rank of major.

Currently, she is a nurse practitioner working in the Tuscaloosa, Bibb and Greene county

health departments. Earning her advanced degrees was not an easy task, especially since she is a mother of three and worked full time while continuing her education.

The title of Ms. Lewis' DNP course project was "Health Literacy of Patients with Abnormal Pap Smears Who Need Follow-up Care." She quantitatively evaluated the health literacy of women with abnormal Pap smear results as the first phase of a project to develop an educational program instructing women about cervical cancer.

"My love for nursing continued to grow, and so did my thirst for knowledge," Ms. Lewis said. "With my degree I hope one day to serve others by working for myself."

Latoya Davis values hard work, perseverance

From an early age, Mrs. Davis said her parents instilled in her the value of hard work and perseverance. Born and raised in Tuscaloosa County, she always knew she wanted to work in the health care arena and her parents repeatedly told her "she can do all things."

"I have always enjoyed helping and taking care of others," Mrs. Davis said, "and today I am doing just that--working in an environment where I am in constant interaction with others as a public health nurse practitioner."

Mrs. Davis' nursing career journey began at the University of Alabama. She graduated in 1999 and began working at a local hospital on a medical/surgical/telemetry/stroke unit. After obtaining some experience, she went on to become a travel nurse, which took her to many places around the country. Her travels included California, New York and Rhode Island, just to name a few.

Not afraid of a challenge, Mrs. Davis returned to school to obtain a family nurse practitioner degree from the Mississippi University for Women in its one-year program. Her reason

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Latoya Davis

for doing so was two-fold: a desire for more autonomy in the nursing profession and to assist in filling the void of health care providers serving rural populations.

Although she said she was somewhat apprehensive about going to school again since she would have a full workload, Mrs. Davis said the desire to keep her skills current motivated her to dive right into the DNP program. She was no stranger to hard work or an intense one-year program. In addition, she credits her supportive family and having “the faith of a mustard seed” as well as once again she remembered her parents’ confidence in her ability.

The DNP has been helpful in many ways. While staying abreast of the current nursing practices, Mrs. Davis’ advanced degree has allowed her to utilize evidence-based practice while working at the Tuscaloosa County Health Department.

The real-life projects presented in the DNP courses can be applied to day-to-day situations she encounters with patients in the workplace. Mrs. Davis said, “My project was on the subject of adolescent obesity, and exploring this has helped me to develop ways to educate my patients.”

“I have a caring heart and enjoy educating my patients, especially about obesity, since this epidemic is leading to chronic diseases and a shorter lifespan in our youth,” she said. Mrs. Davis added that the advanced degree program she pursued was beneficial because it helped enhance her leadership skills and to help her problem solve from different viewpoints.

In the future, she plans to mentor and educate nursing students by becoming a clinical nursing instructor.

DNP Program

Both Mrs. Davis and Ms. Lewis enrolled in the full-time, one-year program which began in August 2008. The DNP course of study is conducted entirely online and consists of writing papers, doing a scholarly project and developing PowerPoints-with some audio work. The only tests required in the curriculum were for statistics and some elective course subjects.

The stated goal of all Capstone College of Nursing degree programs is “to produce qualified and caring advanced practice nurses prepared to face the challenges of the future in nursing.”

This is a joint degree program offered by the University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing, the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing, and the University of Alabama in Huntsville College of Nursing For more information contact <http://www.ua.edu/academic/colleges/nursing/index.html>.

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.

Faye Allen

Brenda Furlow

Health Provider Standards
from Dee Dee Lyon
Birmingham, Ala.

Rick Harris

Health Provider Standards
from Judith Miller Jones
Carol O’Shaughnessy
Washington, D.C.

Vivian Rankin, R.N., M.P.H.

Charlyne White, R.N.

Regina Runderson, R.N., B.S.N.
Health Provider Standards
from Lance K. Dyess, M.D., FABFM
Elba, Ala.

Pamela David, R.D.

Tracey Pittman

Ann White, R.N.

Health Provider Standards
from Felita Smith
Madison, Ala.

Jason Owens

Marion County Health Department
from Rhonda Austin
Tuscumbia, Ala.
Anthony Merriweather, MSPH
Montgomery, Ala.

Jeff Ward and staff

Health Promotion and Chronic Disease
from Greg Locklier
Montgomery, Ala.

Cooperation Key in Dealing with January Water Emergency

Prolonged, record-breaking cold weather in early January resulted in water system shortages for the customers served by the Thomasville and Gees Bend water systems of Southwest Alabama. Public health played an important role in obtaining and filtering water, distributing potable water in several locations, and participating in a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Epi-Aid study of the response.

Dr. Charles Woernle, Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention, said, "I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the staff of more than 50 persons who took part. The local staff members were engaged; it is very clear that the health department staff care. Many good things came of this experience."

In an exit interview March 12, CDC representatives noted that ADPH played an essential role in getting water service restored, issuing water notices, and disseminating good information. They complimented the field staff and others for their "great attitude about their work" and for putting in hours cheerfully. They also praised the food facilities for their compliance.

Sub-freezing temperatures that began Jan. 2 led many customers of rural public water systems to leave faucets dripping to prevent their pipes from freezing. By Jan. 7 the Gees Bend Public Water System pump had malfunctioned and there were extensive waterline breaks in all areas. On Jan. 9 ABC Elementary School closed due to a lack of water from the Gees Bend system. Then on Sunday, Jan. 10, the Clarke County Health Department received a phone complaint about Thomasville facilities operating without water. A complaint investigation resulted in a boil water notice.

The following day the Wilcox County Health Department received word about the Gees Bend water outage, schools were closed and the mayor of Thomasville asked the governor for help. The Clarke County Emergency Management Agency then requested water treatment units to help the public obtain water.

The department sent water purification units purchased to deal with natural disasters to provide clean water in the areas in Clarke and Wilcox counties where water systems had failed. For three days local fire department tankers were deployed to pump water from alternative sources. Water filtration units then purified 250 gallons of water per hour and transported approximately 12,000 gallons of water to local citizens in several sites.

Jackie Holliday, area administrator for PHA 7, emailed the area teams the following, "The cooperation and support between local, area and state is a testament of how well our system works. I am

May 2010



Shown left to right are Tina Pippin, Capt. Mark Miller, Ana Oliviera, Tim Hatch, Dr. Julia Gargano, Jacquelyn Skinner, Dr. Melissa Morrison, Dr. Charles Woernle, Andy Mullins, Kelly Stevens.

very proud of the effort that each has shared." Holliday said he "witnessed 'neighbor helping neighbor' in a way that I thought had long gone," with person after person coming to pick up water for a variety of disabled neighbors and relatives.

Throughout the process, all operations went smoothly, and those in need gladly stepped in, volunteered, filled bags/containers and loaded vehicles. Staff members assisted with water delivery and used equipment purchased through the Department of Homeland Security to the Center for Emergency Preparedness to filter the water.

By Jan. 14 full water pressure was restored in Thomasville and the boil water order was lifted the next day. Water pressure was restored to Gees Bend on Jan. 19 and the boil water notice there was lifted Jan. 25. In Wilcox County, nearly 1,000 homes and businesses served by the Gees Bend Water System were without water for 7 to 12 days. The 5,000 residents of Thomasville were without water for over a week in January.

Woernle wrote the CDC to formally request an Epi-Aid to assist the department in surveying communities affected by the water shortages. Local officials were actively involved and assisted with this project. The CDC approved the Epi-Aid assistance and performed the study in collaboration with state and local staff. The Clarke County Health Department in Grove Hill served as the base.

Two-member teams conducted household surveys in the Thomasville, Jackson, Pine Hill and Gees Bend areas beginning Feb. 27 six days a week between the hours of 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily.

Capt. Mark Miller, CDC environmental health officer, and Dr. Julie Gargano, Epidemic Intelligence Service officer with CDC, provided training for employees. Small focus groups consisting of 4 to 15

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Rural Health Conference a Success

A large number of participants received federal and state updates on Health Information Technology, rural health challenges and how health care reform will have an impact upon rural providers when they attended the Rural Health Conference March 24-25 at the Marriott Legends at Capitol Hill. The conference was sponsored by the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, the Alabama Rural Health Association, and the Office of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma.



Cooperation, continued from page 9

individuals were assembled in Gees Bend and Thomasville to discuss and express their opinions on the situation by local health department employees.

An environmental assessment was made of the utilities, local emergency management agency, local government officials, Alabama Emergency Management Agency and Alabama Department of Environmental Management. Institutional surveys consisted of structured interviews with administrators and managers of health care facilities, schools, daycares, and food facilities in both counties. Health care facilities were sampled, including physician offices, dental offices, pharmacies, schools and day cares. Approximately 500 surveys were completed.

Epi-Aid Project Participants

CDC/ADPH - Melissa Morrison

CDC - Amy Freeland, Julia Gargano, Allen Hightower, Mark Miller, Charles Otto, Lauren Zajac

Communicable Disease - Charles Woernle, M.D., M.P.H.

Center for Emergency Preparedness - Tim Hatch, Andy Mullins

Environmental Services - Steven McDaniel, Mike Clinkscales, Hugh Railey

Epidemiology - Seratia Johnson, Ana Oliviera, Tina Pippin, Jacquelyn Skinner, Allison Smith

Public Health Intern - Nicole Bradford

Public Health Area 7 - Bradley Cooper, Barbara Etheridge, Jackie Holliday, Betty Jowers, Parrish Pugh, Donna Rhone

Public Health Area 9 - Jenni Guerry, Dnene Johnson, Chad Kent, Mechelle Nowlin, Teresa Porter, Ruth Underwood, Jessica Wade

Baldwin County - Byron Webb, Jason Roley

Choctaw County - Bart Robinson

Clarke County - Jamie Bender, Kendall Bush, Renae Carpenter, Charlotte Detlefsen, Ricky Elliott, Kevin Kiser, Jenny Pope, Peggy Roberts, Hope Steadham, Tina Syphrit, Suzanne Terrell

Covington County - Ziba Anderson

Dallas County - Jennifer Roberts, John Strother

Escambia County - Josh Coleman

Hale County - Becky Wilson

Lowndes County - Gary Burton Fisher

Marengo County - Parrish Pugh, Natalie Quinney, Daniel Wismulek

Monroe County - Bryant Hollinger

Perry County - Michael Woodfin

Washington County - David Kelly

Wilcox County - Elvira Phillips, Faye Sheffield, Stephen Wood



Filtered water was distributed to water customers in Wilcox County.

ADPH Observes National Nutrition Month with Satellite Conference on Obesity and Overweight

The health risk factors of obesity and overweight in Alabamians were the focus of a combined satellite conference and webcast March 17. Excessive weight and obesity are major risk factors for cardiovascular diseases, the No. 1 cause of death worldwide. In 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that Alabama has the second highest rate of adult obesity in the nation at 31.2 percent and the sixth highest of rate of overweight youths (ages 10-17) at 36.1 percent. With excessive weight and obesity on the rise, it is important we take control of our heart health.

The CDC has six target areas for weight loss and improved health, which are:

1. Increase physical activity.
2. Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.
3. Decrease consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.
4. Increase breastfeeding initiation and duration.
5. Decrease consumption of high energy-dense foods.
6. Decrease television viewing.

Strategies to work toward are:

- Providing access to healthy foods and to places to be active.
- Strengthening obesity prevention and control programs in preschools, child care centers, work sites, and other community settings.

By educating families, communities and individuals on increasing physical activity and changing decisions to better eating habits, the Alabama Department of Public Health works together with groups like the Alabama Cooperative Extension offices to help Alabama citizens make healthy lifestyle changes.



Satellite conference participants were Metara Austin, Urban Regional Extension Agent, Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Office; health department employees Elana Parker, Wendy Dixon-Flamand, Miriam Gaines, Teresa Fair, Jennifer Sumner and Jessica Hardy; and Josine Walter, Agent Assistant, Autauga County Cooperative Extension Office.

The Alabama Department of Public Health Office of Minority Health, the Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, and Alabama Cooperative Extension offices of Montgomery and Autauga counties partnered in this combined satellite and webcast. This is the sixth satellite conference/webcast program in a series on Alabama health disparities.

To find out more about the free satellite and webcast conferences, go to the Alabama Public Health Training Network at www.adph.org/alphn/ and click on "Satellite Conference and Webcast Schedule" to view program information. For more information on the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities, visit the Federal Office of Minority Health at <http://www.omhrc.gov/> or for additional information, visit the State of Alabama Office of Minority Health Web site at www.adph.org/minorityhealth/



Earth Day Celebration

Public Health Area 2 employees celebrated the 40th anniversary of Earth Day April 22. Shown in their T-shirts are, front row, Rhonda Morgan and Sonya Tinsley; back row, Mike Tyler, Jessica Mullins, Cindy Daigre, Judy Smith and Rene Overton.



Calendar of Events



May 12

Fall Prevention for Home Health Aides and Attendants, 2-4 p.m.

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



May 19

ADPH Nursing Continuing Education, 8-9 a.m.

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



May 19

The Impact of HIV, STDs, Eating Disorders, and Substance Abuse on Mental Health Issues in Minority Women, 2-4 p.m.

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



June 9

Home Health Nurses, 2-4 p.m.

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



June 23

ADPH Nursing Continuing Education, 8-9 a.m.

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



July 1

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

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



July 14

Home Health Aides and Attendants, 2-4 p.m.

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