

Alabama's health

A publication of the Alabama Department of Public Health

Collaborative Eye Clinic Draws Tremendous Response from Bayou LaBatre Community

The Black Belt Eye Care Consortium was approached by the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health and the Office of Minority Health to provide its services in the Katrina-hit areas of Alabama. "Some Hurricane Katrina victims are seeing a brand new world," commented Shelva Brigham of Fox 10 News in Mobile when she reported on the collaborative effort which involved the Bayou LaBatre Lions Club and many other partners.

Dr. Regina Benjamin allowed her office, the Bayou LaBatre Rural Health Clinic, to be used for a planning session for the event. Diverse community groups came together including: Bayou Lions Club, Boat People SOS, International Community Center, Lions Club International Foundation, EyeCare Alabama/Alabama Academy of Ophthalmology,

Luxottica Group, Mostellar Medical Center, Pinnacle Optical, Spectra, the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry Vision Science Research Center as well as the offices of Primary Care and Rural Health, the Office of Minority Health and the Bayou LaBatre Rural Health Clinic.

Many different minority groups were represented in the proposed clinic area. Clinic outreach efforts had to take into consideration the diverse cultural and linguistic populations. Posters in Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Spanish were distributed by the Bayou LaBatre Lions Club and other community volunteers.

The eye clinics are unique because they involve more than just eye screenings, said Mike Merrill, executive director, Alabama



Julia Sosa of the Office of Minority Health is shown applying eye drops.

Academy of Ophthalmology. Patients with eye disease will have follow-up beyond screenings. In addition, free eyeglasses were provided for all persons identified with vision problems.

Over 460 people showed up for the clinic. With an army of volunteers and over 20

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SHA presents Jordan Award to David Newman

David Newman, Support Desk manager for the Computer Systems Center, was presented the Southern Health Association's (SHA) Charles G. Jordan Award, at the SHA recent annual meeting awards luncheon which was held in Savannah, Ga. The Jordan Award is named in honor of a past president of SHA and recognizes an individual who has been employed in public health for less than 10 years and who has demonstrated a potential for achievement in the field of public health above and beyond the usual requirements.

Newman has provided technical support for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) almost from its inception. He was involved in establishing temporary work stations for CHIP enrollment workers when there was a transfer of management of this staff from the State Employees Insurance Board to ADPH within a two-month period of time. He helped research, design, implement and retrieve management information for the technical support needed for the CHIP customer service telephone system. Additionally, he was the lead person to research, purchase and install all the computer hardware to support the operation of CHIP.

In addition to his continued support responsibilities for CHIP and the Office of

Professional and Support Services, Newman is now the manager for the ADPH Support Desk which responds and "troubleshoots" for all the electronic needs for the department. It was stated that while Newman is quite competent at what he does, he goes far beyond the requirements of his job to support CHIP and the department's electronic resources to ensure that the technical part of the operation functions the best way possible for the department to ensure the public's health.

Following are some comments from the letters of support he received:

"David's patience, understanding and continuous guidance in educating staff in using and understanding the latest technology is unsurpassable."

"He is highly qualified with a vast knowledge of computer systems and programs."

"He is able to thoroughly explain these systems and programs to those who are limited in the understanding of such technology, and is always willing to take time from his busy schedule to answer the simple questions."

Many commented on Newman's personal traits stating that he is "always respectful,



The Southern Health Association joined the Alabama Public Health Association in recognizing David Newman for his many contributions.

kind, forever patient, readily available even to being accessible when on leave, very dependable, nicest and most helpful guy you will ever meet."

The Southern Health Association is comprised of members from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

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



Former State Laboratory Building Bites the Dust

The former five-story Public Health Laboratory building at the corner of Monroe Street and Decatur Street in Montgomery's Capitol Complex is no longer.

Gordon Persons was governor and Dr. D. G. Gill was health officer when the building was constructed in 1954 using a combination of state and Hill-Burton Act funds. In 1979 the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories made its move to the current location near Auburn Montgomery which left vacant space for other purposes.

In June 1980 when Dr. Ira L. Myers was state health officer the building was re-named the Public Health Services Building and it was renovated to house the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health/Family Planning, the WIC Program, the Bureau of Dental Health, the Division of Public Water Supplies of the Environmental Health Administration (now a part of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management), and the central supply/mail room.

Under the leadership of State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson, offices in the Public Health Services Building moved to the impressive new RSA Tower in the spring of 1997, and central supply functions

moved to the new warehouse on Mitchell Young Drive later. The building stood vacant for a number of years.

Laboratory Director Dr. William J. Callan has the actual plaque that had been on the building. The site is currently a vacant lot awaiting use as a Retirement Systems of Alabama building that will encompass the historic former State Supreme Court building.



Earl Langley of the Office of EMS and Trauma photographed the building's demolition during November.

Information Services Director Retires

Leon S. Barwick, Jr., retired Sept. 30, after 18 years of service at the department, including leadership positions directing the Computer Systems Center, the Center for Health Statistics and the Logistics Division, as Director of the Bureau of Information Services.

Gov. Bob Riley signed a proclamation recognizing his many accomplishments, including the following:

- directed the nationally recognized project to automate the Alabama Vital Records Storage and Retrieval System which reduced the

time for the citizens of Alabama to obtain a birth record from four weeks to less than 15 minutes

- led the technological transformation of the department from one of the least automated agencies to one of the most technologically advanced agencies
- oversaw the implementation of several major new information technology projects to automate and modernize public health clinics, the Child Health Insurance Program, the Immunization Registry, Home Health, Emergency Preparedness, and the central

office and county data and telephone networks

- modernized logistics support for the department by developing new procedures, implementing automated systems to track inventory, automating forms creation and distribution, and obtaining and updating the logistics warehouse facilities

John Heitman, newly appointed director of the Bureau of Information Services, said, "Leon will be missed by employees throughout the department. He plans to continue living in Wetumpka during his retirement."

Awareness is Key During National Diabetes Month

November is National Diabetes Month. According to the 2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, over 20 million Americans have diabetes. Over 345,300 adults in Alabama have been told they have diabetes--10.6 percent of the males had diabetes, and 9.3 percent of the females had the disease. There are notable differences between Caucasian and African American Alabamians with the prevalence of diabetes among African Americans being almost one and one-half times the prevalence of diabetes among Caucasians.

Obesity and lack of physical activity can contribute to the increase of Type 2 diabetes--27.1 to 30 percent of adults in Alabama do not participate in physical activity, and only 45 percent of Alabama students participate in physical daily education classes, nearly 80 percent of Alabama adults reported not eating enough fruits and vegetables, and the proportion of fruits and vegetables consumed by teens is substantially below the national averages.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Diabetes Control Program has set national objectives related to increasing the percentage of persons with diabetes who receive the recommended

dilated eye exams, foot exams, glycosylated hemoglobin (HbA1c) testing, and influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations.

This year, Alabama's health care providers are asked to copy and post the Target 80 poster from the ADPH diabetes Web site, www.adph.org/diabetes, as a reminder of the focus that must be placed on diabetes indicators.

Target 80 focuses on Alabama's diabetes indicators that must be increased to 80 percent by the year 2010. These indicators involve activities for diabetics and their health care providers -- such as checking one's feet and blood glucose levels, having dilated eye exams, pneumonia vaccinations, flu shots and HbA1c tests.

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey provides annual information concerning the program's progress toward achieving these goals. In 2006 the survey indicated that 65 percent of persons with diabetes reported that they check their blood glucose levels at least daily. A somewhat larger percentage, 73 percent, indicated that their physician had checked HbA1c levels

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Shown with Gov. Bob Riley are Debra Griffin, RN, Diabetes Branch; Mary McIntyre, MD, Alabama Medicaid Agency; Felecia Barrow, MPA, Montgomery Area Wellness Coalition; Helen Herndon-Jones, RD, MS, Alabama Cooperative Extension System; Jack Hataway, MD, Director, Chronic Disease Prevention Division; Kyle Reynold, Dr. Ed, Director Diabetes Branch; Stephanie Willis, MS, American Diabetes Association; Evelyn Crayton, EdD, Family and Consumer Science, Alabama Cooperative Extension System; Ronnie Floyd, Acting Executive Director, Governor's Commission on Physical Fitness and a member of Steps To A Healthier Alabama Advisory Council.

Vision Screenings, continued from page 1....

translators, 127 patients were screened and another 270 were given appointments for four additional clinics that were immediately scheduled due to the high demand. The remaining people were put on a waiting list. By the end of the fifth clinic in Bayou La Batre, 890 people were on a waiting list for vision screenings.

Dr. Mary Jean Sanspree, research professor and project leader from the UAB School of Optometry, commented on the number of people screened that were at risk for blindness.

“People have come in with glaucoma who haven’t been getting medicated eye drops. They can lose their vision if they do not get the drops and use them regularly. Of the 397 patients seen, 94 had vision problems that placed them at risk for vision loss or blindness. Improving eye care in areas with little or no access to services is important in improving the quality of life for Alabamians”

Rural Health Outreach Coordinator Carolyn Bern with the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health credits the volunteers from the



Volunteers screened patients for vision problems.

Bayou LaBatre Lions Club, the Lions Club International Foundation, International Community Center and Boat People SOS for the clinics’ success. “They called patients to remind them of their appointments and staffed the clinics. We did not anticipate the huge crowds, particularly at the first clinic. We couldn’t have done this so successfully without all of our wonderful partners.”

By CAROLYN BERN

Comprehensive Cancer Staff Take to the Tees to Prevent Skin Cancer

Sunscreen is needed in all seasons of the year, and representatives of Alabama’s Comprehensive Cancer Program promoted the use of sunscreens of at least 15 SPF at the Ladies Professional Golf Association Navistar Classic at the Robert Trent Jones course in Prattville Sept. 27 and 28.

Program Director Kathryn Chapman, Dr.P.A., and staff members Ann Dagostin and Allison



Allison Lance helps protect a golf tournament spectator by spraying on sunscreen.

Lance sprayed on sunscreen and distributed long golf tees and guidelines to reduce sun exposure to more than 1,000 spectators at the event as part of the **Alabama Put on your Sun Screen and Smile** campaign.

“Our golf tees have been a fun and creative way to discuss the need for sunscreen with people who spend a great deal of time outdoors,” Dr. Chapman said. “Having such a prestigious event in our backyard gave us a wonderful opportunity to try our golf tee promotion. We are interested in learning about other tournaments, especially on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail where we can promote sun safety awareness.”

Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States. More than one million Americans are diagnosed with it each year. Of these, 55,000 will have melanoma, a leading cause of cancer death



Ann Dagostin and Allison Lance distribute golf tees bearing the campaign message “Alabama...put on your sunscreen and smile.”

in the United States. Frequent exposure to the sun also leads to basal cell or squamous cell skin cancers which can be very painful, cause disfigurement and require extensive reconstructive surgery if left untreated.

Tobacco Mini-grants Funded for the Sixth Year

The 2007-2008 Tobacco Mini-Grant Program is off to a great start. This is the sixth year that local organizations have been funded. This year, \$464,000 in state dollars from the Master Settlement Agreement will be distributed among 16 organizations such as prevention agencies, school boards, extension services and church groups. These grants will fund a number of activities that focus on education, community advocacy and prevention through the use of the media.

Grantees will use Youth Empowerment Program (YEP!) students to help with Operation Storefront in which students survey local tobacco outlets to determine how many tobacco ads and displays are in each store. The YEP! students also conduct presentations to other students about the dangers of tobacco, as well as help with tobacco prevention awareness media activities during Red Ribbon Week in October, the Great American Smoke-Out (Nov. 15, 2007), Kick Butts Day (April 2, 2008), and World No Tobacco Day (May 31, 2008). The grantees will also utilize LifeSkills training in the schools to educate sixth graders on the dangers of tobacco use. LifeSkills is a comprehensive school-based substance abuse prevention program that is designed to prevent tobacco, alcohol and drug use among adolescents as well as discourage other high-risk behaviors.

From education in the classroom to community advocacy, the mini-grant program has evolved to encouraging citizens to protect themselves from secondhand smoke exposure, which is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States and kills 53,000 Americans each year. Since May of 2003, 52 cities have passed ordinances to increase protection against second hand smoke exposure in restaurants, bars, government buildings, parks, workplaces and other public places. Approximately 19 other cities are being educated about health hazards of second hand smoke exposure and citizens are mobilizing to protect the health, welfare and safety of their employees, patrons and children. Up to 1,080 children and adults die as a result of second hand smoke each year in Alabama.

The current grant year will end June 30, 2008. The next funding cycle will run from Oct. 1, 2008, to Sept. 30, 2009. Applications for the new grant cycle will be available in the spring of 2008. To apply for funding and obtain a grant application, contact Betsy Jones at ElizabethAJones@adph.state.al.us or go to www.adph.org/tobacco and click on the Youth TPC Program page where you will find a link for the Request for Application.

Choosing Your Monthly Retirement Benefit

Contact an ERS Retirement Counselor

When a member submits a retirement application to the ERS, the staff calculates the monthly benefit under the Maximum Monthly Benefit and the Optional Monthly Benefits. This information is mailed to the retiring member along with the **Retirement Benefit Option Selection and Tax Form Packet and Postretirement Employment Options** memorandum. The member must complete the **Retirement Benefit Option Selection** form by selecting the retirement benefit the member wishes to receive. The form must be received by the ERS no later than the day prior to the effective date of retirement.

If no election of an option is made prior to the effective date of retirement, the law specifies that the member will receive the Maximum retirement benefit. Once the member

retires, the monthly benefit cannot be changed. If you have any questions, please contact the ERS at 800-214-2158 and speak to a retirement counselor. It is **highly advisable** to attend an ERS Retirement Preparation seminar and visit with a retirement counselor before you retire. More information is available on our Web site at www.rsa.state.al.us.

Maximum Monthly Benefit

The Maximum Monthly Benefit is the largest monthly benefit available to a retiring member of the ERS. This benefit is a lifetime benefit paid to the retiree on a monthly basis. This benefit is calculated based on the member's average final salary times service credit times the retirement factor of .020125 (.02875 for State Police). At the death of the retiree, all monthly benefits cease. The designated beneficiary(s) will receive a one-time prorated payment covering the days of the month that the retiree was still living.

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Hospital is 'Kicking Butts'

Steps to a HealthierAL, Southeast Alabama Region, provided Medical Center Barbour with a mini-grant to help them "kick butts." As of Sept. 1, the hospital in Eufaula became a smoke-free work environment. Employees are not allowed to smoke once they drive on the premises, so there will be no more smoking breaks in their personal vehicles. The hospital will have a designated smoking area for guests, but the hospital is really working toward changing employees that smoke.

Through the mini-grant supplied by the Southeast Alabama Region, Amy Phillips, the hospital's director of education, employee health and infection control, was able to attend a seminar that dealt with issues concerning tobacco-dependency treatment. The theme for the program is "Be Powerful, not Patient."

Through this seminar, she is hoping to use what she learned to help others in her area. Ms. Phillips is not only targeting the hospital employees, but also other businesses in the Eufaula area. Phillips has hosted Chamber of Commerce functions for business and industry in the area, as well as two tobacco cessation classes. She is being asked by businesses to teach a class on site.

By BRANDI POUNCEY

Diabetes, continued from page 4

at least twice within the past year. Sixty-six percent of the persons with diabetes reported that they check their own feet daily and a similar number, 67.5 percent, reported that a health care professional had performed at least one foot exam within the past 12 months. Similarly, nearly two-thirds (70.3 percent) of persons with diabetes reported having a dilated eye exam within the past year. Persons with diabetes reporting that they had received a flu vaccination within 12 months were 59.3 percent or a pneumonia vaccination at some point in their lifetimes, 52.1 percent.

National Diabetes Month is here! Alabamians are asked to show their support for the Alabama Department of Public Health's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, its national and local partnerships, and all activities designed to reduce the burden and complications of this disease.

December 2007

Alabamians Urged to Practice Fire Escape Plans

Shown at a news conference to promote the Alabama Statewide Fire Drill are State Fire Marshal Ed Paulk, fire survivor Quran Wilson, State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson, and Capt. Michael Brayman of the Trussville Fire and Rescue. State Farm Insurance made a grant of \$15,000 to provide DVDs for each elementary school and fire station in the state and to print pamphlets for students and parents. Dr. Williamson also urged everyone to make sure their homes are as safe as possible and to be particularly careful when cooking and smoking.



Public Health Nursing Patches Are Here

Public Health Nursing logo patches are now available at a nominal cost of \$2.50. The logo is navy and white and depicts the nursing Lamp of Knowledge and the inaugural year of Public Health in Alabama.

Patches may be ironed or sewn on to nursing uniforms and laboratory jackets. Patches may be ordered by sending a check, made payable to the Alabama Public Health

Association, to Valerie Cochran in the Nursing Division, Bureau of Professional and Support Services, RSA Tower, Suite 1010, 201 Monroe St., Montgomery, Ala. 36104.



Alabama's Health

Breastfeeding Peer Counselors Play Important Role in Mobile

The Mobile County Health Department WIC Program has seen a positive change in the attitude of prenatal and newly delivered moms since implementing the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program. Mobile County employs five breastfeeding peer counselors at the Teen Center who counsel prenatal and breastfeeding mothers on the benefits of breastfeeding and common concerns.

Peer counselors have played an important role in increasing the breastfeeding initiation rate at this clinic. The peer counselors encourage and support mothers in their decision to breastfeed their baby. According to Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator Angelia K. Cunningham, LPN, IBCLC, of the Teen Center, "Peer counselors are sharing how they were able to breastfeed successfully, sometimes without family support, how they

were able to fit breastfeeding into returning to work and/or school, and addressing myths regarding breastfeeding. The peer counselors are available to provide support at a very important time."

In August, the local WIC clinic staff and peer counselors hosted an annual breastfeeding reception in the auditorium of the Teen Center. The reception was attended by approximately 35 prenatal and breastfeeding moms who brought family members and friends with them. A speaker from a local hospital talked to the attendees about breastfeeding. Display booths provided the mothers with breastfeeding information and incentive items.

The Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program will expand to four more counties early in this fiscal year. Currently, WIC peer counselor



Peer counselors shown are Rhonda Westerfield, Sabrina Miles and Crystal Workman.

services are available at the Eastbrook WIC Training Clinic in Montgomery, Blount County Health Department and the Teen Center in Mobile.

Retirement, continued from page 6

Optional Monthly Benefit

A member may provide a benefit for a beneficiary by selecting one of the following options.

Option 1

The monthly benefit under Option 1 is slightly less than the Maximum. This benefit is a lifetime benefit paid to the retiree on a monthly basis; however, if the retiree dies prior to receiving annuity payments exceeding his or her account balance, the remaining balance will be paid to the designated beneficiary(s).

Option 2 (100% Survivor Benefit)

Option 2 allows the retiree to receive a reduced benefit over the life of the retiree in return

for allowing the designated beneficiary (only one beneficiary may be designated) to receive the same lifetime benefit after the retiree's death. The benefits are based on the ages of the retiree and the beneficiary. Once the member retires, he or she cannot change their beneficiary unless the beneficiary predeceases the retiree or if the retiree and the beneficiary become divorced. See **Replacement Beneficiary**.

Option 3 (50% Survivor Benefit)

Option 3 allows the retiree to receive a reduced benefit over the life of the retiree in return for allowing the designated beneficiary (only one beneficiary may be designated) to receive one-half of the retiree benefit over the beneficiary's lifetime after the

retiree's death. The benefits are based on the ages of the retiree and the beneficiary. Therefore, once the member retires, he or she cannot change their beneficiary unless the beneficiary predeceases the retiree or if the retiree and the beneficiary become divorced. See **Replacement Beneficiary**.

Option 4

Members may elect to receive a monthly benefit actuarially equivalent to the regular retirement benefit. The ERS Board of Control must approve this option. The monthly benefit paid to the beneficiary cannot exceed the limits determined by federal taxation laws.

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Video Educates Preschoolers About Controlling Infections

Pandemic influenza occurs when a new virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity and for which there is no vaccine. Nearly half of avian influenza (H5N1) cases in the world have been in children, and there are precautions that can be taken to prevent the spread from person to person.

The Alabama Department of Public Health is introducing a storybook video to teach children infection control measures such as hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when sick. This is part of the effort to ensure that even the youngest Alabama citizen is aware of, planning for, and preparing for the possibility of pandemic influenza.

A cartoon character DVD titled "Mimi Mouse Learns Healthy Habits" is being sent to all Alabama child care centers statewide. The video is accompanied by coloring sheets and stickers.

"With flu season right around the corner and the recent attention given to staph infections, Mimi Mouse provides very important information that will be helpful in reducing transmission of colds, flu and staph infections," said Dr. Thomas Miller, assistant state health officer for personal and community health. "Parents should ask their child's school or child care center when the presentations will be shown."

Children are more likely than adults to spread germs, so the Alabama Department of Public Health has made a strong effort to educate them about infection control measures as early as possible. Alabama

is the first state to use the new Channing Bete educational video which was created specifically for child care centers' use.

The DVD was introduced to preschool children at Taylor Road Baptist Church's child care center in Montgomery at a premiere showing. This program follows a project last spring in which letters and pandemic influenza educational folders were sent to all exempt and nonexempt child care providers to educate the directors and staff about pandemic influenza.

"We are excited that Alabama's children will have the opportunity to learn and practice good preventive methods from an early age," Dr. Miller added. "Alabama's child care centers have an important role to play in teaching young children, and this cartoon video will help children and adults alike prevent transmission of bacteria and viruses to others."

Other recent educational projects include a four-disc presentation set and handbooks that the State Department of Education distributed to all faculty and staff statewide. In 2008 an initiative will utilize VISTA volunteers to distribute the video to child care centers that meet less frequently, such as Sunday morning nurseries and Mothers/Fathers Days Out. New pandemic influenza educational printed materials include the publication "Prepare for Home Care" in adult and child versions.

More information about pandemic influenza is available at www.adph.org/pandemicflu.



Assistant State Health Officer for Personal and Community Health Dr. Thomas Miller, Georgia Blaze and her mother Kathie Blaze are shown at the premiere of "Mimi Mouse Learns Healthy Habits." The cartoon character storybook DVD was introduced to teach children infection control measures at a young age. For more information on the Mimi Mouse educational initiative, contact project developers Cindy Lesinger or Angela Stanley in the Center for Emergency Preparedness at (334) 206-3394.

Originality abounded when the Office of Personnel and Staff Development sponsored the 2007 Annual Costume Contest Oct. 31 in the RSA Park. The HIPAA Queen Cheryl Perez (lower left) and Elvis the King, Justin George, tied for the top spot. Shown are some of the other outstanding competitors.

Individuals outside the agency did the judging for the contestants from the RSA Tower and the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories.



Campaign Encourages HIV Screening

HIV/AIDS Division Director Jane Cheeks is shown in the foreground of the HIV/AIDS Division's latest campaign which promotes routine screening for HIV infections. The division has launched a "haul-ad" campaign which uses tractor-trailer posters on 18-wheelers. The posters are displayed on both sides and the rear of the trucks. The testing campaign comes in response to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Revised Recommendations for HIV Testing (September 2006), which state, "In all health-care settings, screening for HIV infection should be performed routinely for all patients aged 13-64 years."

During the next six months, and perhaps for even longer, five tractor-trailer rigs will be visible to the public as they traverse the state. The colorful traveling advertisements, designed by Noelle Ahmann of the Health Marketing Division, read: "HIV? AIDS? Get Tested. For information on free testing, call 1-800-228-0469."



Retirement, continued from page 8

Replacement Beneficiary

Retirees who elected joint survivor options (Option 2, 3 or 4) at the time of retirement may name a new beneficiary under either of the two following conditions:

If the named beneficiary dies before the retired member
Or

There is a divorce between the retired member and the beneficiary

The retired member should contact the ERS for information and forms. Generally, there will be a recalculation of the benefit amount for the retired member and beneficiary. The replacement beneficiary

must be in place for at least two years to become effective. However, if the retired member dies within this two-year period, no monthly survivor benefit is payable.

Prepared by the Communications staff of the Retirement Systems of Alabama.

To have your questions answered in "Preparing for Retirement," please address them to:

Mike Pegues, Communications
Retirement Systems of Alabama
135 S. Union St., P.O. Box 302150
Montgomery, Ala. 36130-2150.

Commendations

Alabama's Health would like to recognize and praise employees for their accomplishments. To recognize outstanding work, supervisors may send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer, mail copies to Alabama's Health, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease, RSA Tower, Suite 900, 201 Monroe St., Montgomery, Ala. 36104, or by e-mail to asheehan@aph.state.al.us for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee's name, work unit, the name of the person making the commendation and his or her city and state.

Carissa Adams

Financial Services
from Sherry Bradley
Montgomery, Ala.

Sandra Blakely

Video Communications
from Sandra Wood
Montgomery, Ala.

Janis C. Pritchett

Financial Services
from Sherry Bradley
Montgomery, Ala.

Calendar of Events



January 17 • Satellite Conf & Web Cast
**Fitness for Duty: A Simple System
for Making Health-related Change,
12 noon-1:30 p.m.**

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



January 24 • Satellite Conf & Web Cast
**A Guide to Working with Recent Latin
Immigrant Clients Sowing the Seeds of
Health: A Program for Latinas.**

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



January 31 • Satellite Conf & Web Cast
**Emergency Management
Assistance Compact,
12 noon-1:30 p.m.**

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



January 16 • Satellite Conf & Web Cast
**International Public Health Education: The
Experience from Master's of Public Health Program
in Developing Settings Worldwide, 1-2:30 p.m.**

For more information visit www.adph.org/alphtn.



January 23 • Satellite Conf & Web Cast
**How Can Use of the Performance
Standards Drive National, State and
Local Public Health Policy? 1-2:30 p.m.**

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



January 30 • Satellite Conf & Web Cast
**Political Leadership, Health Policies and
Health Disparities in Developed and
Developing Nations, 1-2:30 p.m.**

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

April 6-7

**Alabama Public Health Association
52nd Annual Educational
Conference, Doubletree Hotel,
Birmingham**

For more information visit www.alphassoc.org.