

ALABAMA'S

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Healthy Alabama 2010 results released

The Alabama Department of Public Health announces the release of new health objectives concerning Alabamians in a document titled: *Healthy Alabama 2010*. With assistance from other state agencies and organizations, 47 measurable objectives representative of the health needs of Alabamians were selected for inclusion in the document. The overall theme centers upon increasing the life expectancy and quality of life for Alabamians.

Healthy Alabama 2010 Objectives are divided into the following four major topic areas:

- promote healthy behaviors,
- promote healthy and safe communities,
- improve systems for personal and public health, and
- prevent and reduce diseases and disorders.

"*Healthy Alabama 2010* sets measurable objectives for comprehensive health promotion and disease prevention," said State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson. "The objectives are to measure Alabama's progress in the first decade of the 21st century."

Dr. Williamson said, "These are ambitious, yet achievable goals for a 10-year plan to improve Alabama's health. *Healthy Alabama 2010* provides objectives that can be used to reduce health risks, racial disparities and improve the overall health status of Alabamians. The document highlights the life expectancy disparity that exists between whites and African-American Alabamians. For example, in *Healthy Alabama 2010*, the life expectancy objective is to increase life expectancy of all Alabamians to 76.8 years of age. In 1998, the life expectancy of a white Alabamian was 75.3 years compared to 70.2 years for an African-American Alabamian.

"The Alabama Department of Public Health will use

these objectives to promote health, prevent illness, and reduce premature death," Dr. Williamson said. "The department is striving to make additional information readily available to the public through the Internet. Interested individuals or organizations may obtain a copy of the report by going to the department's website at www.alapubhealth.org."

Highlights released from *Healthy Alabama 2010 Objectives* include the following:

Some areas of challenge for this decade:

- the rising trend of lack of physical activity,
- increase in percentage of overweight individuals,
- lack of decline of smoking prevalence over the past years. An area of concern is the incidence of HIV/AIDS cases in African-Americans.

In some areas, the state has experienced positive trends and hopes these trends will continue such as:

- a decrease in the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases cases for gonorrhea and primary and secondary syphilis,
- a decrease in heart disease deaths in the past decade,
- maintenance of high vaccination coverage.

If you would like to be sent a copy of *Healthy Alabama 2010*, contact Geraldine Rose Daniels or Toni Prater at 1-800-252-1818 or mail requests to the Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease, Alabama Department of Public Health, RSA Tower, Suite 900, P. O. Box 303017, Montgomery, Ala. 36130-3017.

By Geraldine Rose Daniels

New rules govern tattooing, body piercing, scarification and branding

The State Committee of Public Health has adopted new Rules for Body Art Practice and Facilities, effective May 4, 2001, as a consequence of Act 321 of the 2000 legislative session.

These rules cover the practices of tattooing, including scarification, body piercing, and branding when done for compensation. The new rules defined all of the practices covered in the law under the general heading of "body art" since that is the terminology used in the industry.

A major point of the law, and the new rules, is to ban any body art procedure being done on a minor (under 18 years old) without parental consent. The rules also set standards requiring the body art operator to wear gloves during a procedure, to not perform a procedure on a person under the influence of intoxicating liquor or a controlled substance, and have specific standards for sterilization of equipment.

Along with standards for practice; the rules set standards for the facility itself, such as having a handwashing sink in each room, and banning carpet in the procedure area.

A copy of the rules is posted on the Bureau of Environmental Services' web page.

By Ron Dawsey

WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program continues to grow

The Alabama WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, now in its third year of operation, will serve 12 counties and 21 WIC clinics in 2001. This is a food and nutrition education program that is a collaborative effort among the Alabama WIC Program, the Alabama Farmers Market Authority, and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

This program provides nutrition education and certain locally-grown fresh fruits and vegetables to women and children who are enrolled with the WIC Program during the summer months. Created at the national level in 1992 by a Congressional grant, the program was piloted in Alabama in 1999. A similar program for seniors, administered by the Alabama Farmers Market Authority, is being piloted in Alabama this summer.

Richard W. Burleson, WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program coordinator, said, "The program only was available in Montgomery, Dallas and Madison counties during 2000. It has expanded three-fold, and we hope it will continue to grow until it is available to WIC participants statewide."

The program is funded 70 percent by federal funds from the United States Department of Agriculture and 30 percent by state matching funds, and it is administered WIC.....continued on page 4

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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Informational materials in alternative formats will be made available upon request..

Report explores why postneonatal mortality is not declining in Alabama

The article “Postneonatal Mortality in Alabama: Why No Progress in the 90s?” was published in the April 2001 issue of *The Annals of Epidemiology* (Vol. 11, No. 3). Louie Albert Woolbright, Ph.D., authored the study which examined the factors associated with postneonatal mortality.

Dr. Woolbright is director of the department’s Division of Statistical Analysis, Center for Health Statistics. His purpose was to examine the factors associated with postneonatal mortality, that is, deaths of infants from 1 month to 1 year of age.

In Alabama, the postneonatal mortality rate in 1996 was 3.6 per 1,000 live births, exactly the same rate as in 1990. In only two years during the 1990s (1995 and 1997) has the postneonatal mortality rate been lower than it was at the beginning of the decade. During the same time period, neonatal mortality has declined by 16.4 percent.

Logistic regression was used to examine the effects of various variables on postneonatal mortality. Variables included in the model are those most often found to be significant predictors of postneonatal mortality and which are available on birth and death certificates. These variables include prenatal care, smoking status, weight gain and maternal age.

Dr. Woolbright’s study found that the most important predictor of postneonatal mortality was birth weight of babies, but social and economic variables were also important in explaining postneonatal mortality.

The study concluded that the lack of progress in reducing postneonatal mortality is due to the following:

- a more vulnerable population of neonatal survivors
- a lack of improvement in social and economic conditions affecting the population of mothers giving birth

Conclusions were that reductions in postneonatal mortality may require closer case management of low birth weight neonatal survivors. Survival of these infants creates a cohort of infants at risk of postneonatal mortality.

“Many of these low birth weight infants are born into an environment where their mothers’ parenting potential is compromised by youth and poverty,” the study stated. “This may be responsible for the failure to reduce postneonatal mortality and explain its increasing proportion of infant deaths; deaths may be being postponed from the neonatal to the postneonatal period.”

The report recommends taking a more comprehensive approach to reduce postneonatal mortality, including more case management activity and closer home supervision.

Dr. Woolbright concluded, “At any rate, preventing postneonatal deaths is becoming progressively more difficult and will require more resources and effort on the part of society.”

For copies of the article, contact Dr. Woolbright at the Center for Health Statistics, RSA Tower Suite 1150, P.O. Box 303017, Montgomery, Ala. 36130-3017, telephone 334-206-2694.

Susan List named Employee of the Month

Susan List was selected Employee of the Month for the Central Office for March. Ms. List is a delayed records specialist within the Center for Health Statistics. Her primary job duty is to prepare delayed certificates of birth, which involves dealing with numerous agencies and persons from all walks of life, often including elderly customers who have difficulty understanding how to file a delayed birth certificate. According to nominator Joan Styres, director of the Special Services Division, “Susan exhibits a tremendous amount of patience and expertise when dealing with her customers.”

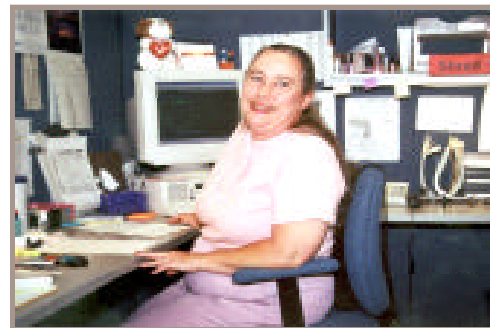
In addition to her current job responsibilities, she has assisted in processing checks returned for insufficient funds, preparing the daily deposits, and entering mail requests into the Vital Statistics Image Oriented Network (ViSION) system. She readily assists in these areas or any others when needed.

Ms. Styres said, “Susan is always willing to help. When a coworker was having surgery, Susan graciously agreed to assist with death certificate amendments, having never done them before. She was a quick study and never complained about her

new task. In fact, she asked not to give up her other duties so she could stay current on her skills.”

Ms. List is praised for her good sense of humor, reliability, punctuality, conscientiousness and excellent attitude about her job.

By Geraldine Rose Daniels



Health Statistics employee Susan List accepts new responsibilities willingly.

through the WIC Program. In Alabama, most of the matching funds come from a direct legislative appropriation in the Farmers Market Authority budget. This year the match was supplemented by a grant from the Alabama Chapter of the March of Dimes. The Alabama Farmers Market Authority coordinates the program with farmers and markets, while the Alabama Cooperative Extension Systems provides nutrition education materials and classes.

The checks which the WIC participants use to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from Alabama farmers are issued only once per year, during the summer. Only unprocessed, locally-grown fresh fruits and vegetables can be bought with these checks.

This program has already been proven to be very beneficial to not only the WIC participants, but also to local farmers, farmers markets, and the community at large. In addition to nutritional and educational benefits, the program helps support farmers markets and even helps establish a farmers market where none exists.

Counties participating this summer are as follows: Blount, Calhoun, Dallas, Escambia, Fayette, Franklin, Houston, Lauderdale, Madison, Montgomery, Morgan and Tuscaloosa. At this time, all WIC clinics (both Health

Department sites and private local agencies) in each of these counties plan to participate.

For more information about this program, please contact Richard W. Burluson, WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program coordinator, at (334) 206-2929, e-mail at rburluson@adph.state.al.us.



Locally grown products are available.

Disease intervention program manager pursues unusual hobby

Michael Ramage, director of Epidemiology and Surveillance for the Sexually Transmitted Disease Control Division, enjoys a hobby that seems unbelievable to many in public health—drag racing. For the past two years he has been driving his 1987 Mustang to the Montgomery Motorsports Park where he competes regularly on Friday nights.

“My middle son got me hooked on it, and my oldest son races there,” Ramage said. “I do it strictly for fun and the adrenaline. Testing and tuning events are great.”

Ramage, who just turned 49, hasn’t been given a traffic ticket since he was 16 years old and does his best to avoid rush hour traffic on Montgomery’s interstate highways. In fact, his work hours are 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. He drives the same Mustang to work at the RSA Tower that he drives at the Motorsports Park.

With the many recent deaths on the NASCAR circuit, drag racing would seem an extremely hazardous pursuit to choose. But Ramage always wears his seat belt on the track and follows the safety requirements imposed at the drag strip. He said there have been accidents there, but he is unaware of any injuries to drivers or passengers.

Ramage handles data for the STD Division at the Central Office.



Michael Ramage poses alongside his Mustang.

Public health professionals honored

The Alabama Public Health Association recently recognized persons and agencies from across the state who demonstrated exceptional merit during the past year in the field of public health. The following individuals and organization were presented awards at the association's Annual Meeting and Health Education Conference at the Marriott in Huntsville April 18.

Viki Brant of Montgomery, director of the Cancer Prevention Branch, was presented the D.G. Gill Award. This award is given to an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to public health in Alabama which is statewide in scope.

A nominator said, "Her ability to blend public and private sector screening services and understand the vital role communities play in cancer prevention and control has resulted in partnerships that enhance screening services statewide and engage community leaders and volunteers in reaching and increasing the participation of our most vulnerable and underserved citizens."

Other nominators credited her for providing the vision, creativity and dedicated leadership to ensure that over 14,000 women have received life-saving cancer screenings. For example, a cancer volunteer and breast cancer survivor praised Ms. Brant's ability to communicate on all levels with all cultures and credited her with breaking cultural barriers.

Charlotte E. Denton of Montgomery was honored with the Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence. The Myers Award was established in 1986 to recognize an individual, group or organization that, through excellence in their work, has made a significant impact upon some aspect of public health in Alabama.

Mrs. Denton has been responsible for developing an infection control program for the department, and currently is director of the Infection Control Division of the Bureau of Communicable Disease.

A nominator said, "Ms. Denton has a passion and outstanding breadth of knowledge about infection control practice. She has been a valuable resource, both as an advocate and trainer, for individuals and institutions throughout Alabama."

Lee Hallmark of Muscle Shoals was presented the prestigious Frederick S. Wolf Award, which is given to an individual active in public health at the local level for more than 10 years. Mrs. Hallmark is secretary to the area health officer, Dr. Karen Landers, to whom she provides "invaluable support."

One nominator commented on Mrs. Hallmark's genuine care and concern for her co-workers. Others praised her organizational skills and character. Another nominator said,

"She continues her public service outside of work through her work with her church, visiting nursing homes, visiting hospitals, coordinating special gift collections for needy families at Christmas. She is our No. 1 fundraiser for our local charity fund through which we purchase medicine for uninsured children."



Shown are (left to right, front row) Lee Hallmark, Viki Brant, Charlotte Denton, Debbie Patterson, second row, Sue Beasley, Tonya Yuhaus, and Director Jackie Aydelott.

Debbie Patterson of Montgomery was selected as the recipient of the Virginia Kendrick Award. This prestigious award goes to an individual who has provided notable service to

the people of Alabama while serving in a supportive position in public health. Mrs. Patterson is a lead trainer with the Computer Systems Center. She has been employed for 20 years with the department.

One nominator said, "Ms. Patterson's positive 'I can do anything' attitude has resulted in roughly one-half of the state being trained for the computer system." Nominators often commented that she has a true love of public health and her fellow employees.

"She is a true example of a Christian and a pillar of strength to those who are a part of her life," a nominator stated.

The Guy M. Tate Award was presented to the **Escambia County Retired Senior Volunteer Program**. This award is presented annually to a public health employee, group or agency with 10 years or less of service for contributions to public health beyond the job assignment which promote and protect public health in Alabama.

Escambia County RSVP has supported public health activities through the years, and during the past year has formed a partnership with the "Coalition For Healthier Escambia County." The coalition is a grassroots initiative comprised of consumers and health care organizations, agencies and professionals from throughout the county. The coalition supports the ALL Kids program for uninsured children and youth by assisting parents with the application process and following through to ensure enrollment.

A letter of nomination stated, "They represent the best of what can happen when a community joins force to make a positive difference in the health of its citizens."

Temporary Alternative Duty Program is beneficial for our agency

The Temporary Alternative Duty Program of the Alabama Department of Public Health has just completed its second year of operation, and the statistics suggest it has been highly effective in reducing costs to the department.

The program places employees who have been injured on the job on light duty status. Experience with worksite injuries indicates that the speed of recovery for the employee seems to accelerate the earlier an injured employee returns to work.

Supervisors work with the returning employees to find suitable tasks. For example, a home health aide who has injured her back might accompany and assist another aide with the duties she can safely perform. Other employees might work outside of their class temporarily, according to their particular work restrictions.

Risk Manager Dennis Blair of the Office of General Counsel said, "With a few restrictions we like to get employees back to work within eight weeks, and we find most employees and supervisors are okay with it. It's worth it, because this helps save jobs and programs supported by the General Fund."

The Temporary Alternative Duty Program began in April 1999. Compared with a two-year period preceding it, the number of claims, the amount of money lost, and the dollar cost per claim have all declined markedly, as shown below:

Indemnity Claims	1-1-96 thru 12-1-97	4-1-99 thru 3-29-01	Comparison
Number of Claims	150	95	-37%
Amount Paid	\$803,239	\$155,128	-81%
Dollar Cost Per Claim	\$5,355	\$1,633	-70%

Other state departments such as Corrections and Mental Health/Mental Retardation have similar programs in place.

Blair realizes that accommodating these new work situations is sometimes frustrating or difficult for co-workers, but the results show the value of these efforts. "I would like to thank all of you for your work and support of this program," Blair stated.

Alabama's Best Practices Conference to convene

Alabama's Best Practices is back! The funding for this program was stopped almost three years ago, but thanks to the financial support of the Alabama Nursing Home Association and the Alabama Department of Public Health, this project designed to help the long-term care industry share information is back and running.

On June 7, 2001, the Best Practices Conference for 2001 will take place at the Richard M. Scrushy Center, in Birmingham. This one-day event will be filled with opportunities for nursing homes to learn from one another. It allows nursing homes throughout the state of Alabama to not only come up with new ideas to improve their facilities, but to share what works and what doesn't with other facilities in the state.

This year's Best Practices winners were chosen by individuals of a 14 member professional review panel. A total of 16 winners will share their "best" practices with the rest of the state in the Best Practice Exhibit Hall. Six finalists will give presentations and share information on how their homes:

- * Created a mentor program to reduce employee turnover and meet the state's survey team request for a more measurable response
- * Improved nutrition in patients with unplanned weight loss
- * Developed an activities program designed to motivate patients who are not ambulatory

- * Implemented the Total Quality Management philosophy of Dr. W. Edward Deming
- * Designed a room (inexpensively) for Alzheimer patients which has been proven to have an almost immediate calming effect; and
- * Coordinated a medication program with an area university, where pharmacy students could intern and at the same time improve patient care by reducing the possibility of medication errors

Alabama's Best Practice Conference is designed to be a way to share ideas and information in the minds of people with different interests, educational backgrounds, ages and cultures. From the nursing assistant to the administrator, from review panelists to potential sponsors, Best Practices communicates concepts that have already been proven to be effective. By attending this event, participants may earn six hours of continuing education units.

Cost of the pre-registration for the convention is \$60 (deadline June 1, 2001) or \$100 at the door.

For more information, please contact: Bonnie Perry at (334) 444-3111 or e-mail address: AlabamaBP@aol.com.

By Bonnie Perry

Spring/Summer 2001 resource catalog available

A catalog of distance learning courses and other resources, "Resources for Learning," is now available through the Public Health Foundation. The items contained in the revised catalog are high-quality, affordable materials designed for use by public health professionals and health care practitioners.

Courses and resources are available in a variety of formats, including print-based, computer-based, and video self-study courses; resource manuals; CD-ROMs; provider information packets, patient brochures; and slide sets. Many of the items are accredited for continuing education credits.

New releases described in the updated catalog are the following:

- Appropriate antibiotic use
- Community Health Status Indicators
- Epi Info 2000
- Epi-TUTOR/PARADIGM
- Healthy Plan-*it*

The Public Health Foundation is a partner in the Public Health Training Network and works closely with federal agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide training and resource materials to help strengthen the capacity and infrastructure of public health agencies and systems. These materials are used by local state and federal health agencies; schools of public

health, universities, colleges, and medical schools; hospitals; managed care organizations, and others.

TrainingFinder is a free distance learning clearinghouse. Visit www.phf.org to find listings for the training programs you need. A copy is also available in the Video Communications Division. Specific titles can be ordered by calling toll-free, (877) 252-1200.

Commendations

H health department employees who are listed here have received letters of commendation recently. To recognize other employees, please send letters through your supervisors or the state health officer to *Alabama's Health*.

Pat Mackey

Northwest Alabama Regional Health Department

from Elesia Crosswhite
Florence, Ala.

Sondra Reese, M.P.H.

Health Promotion and Chronic Disease

from Geraldine Rose Daniels
Health Promotion and Chronic Disease

Teela Reynolds

Health Promotion and Chronic Disease

from Catherine Naman
Mobile, Ala.

Liz Todd

Area 10 Tobacco Prevention and Control

from Martha Thompson
Enterprise, Ala.

Calendar of Events

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month, Bike Safety Month, National High Blood Pressure Month, National Sight Saving Month, National Trauma Awareness Month, Older Americans Month and Stroke Awareness Month.



May 9

Women's Health, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Fay Smith, (334) 206-5655.

May 11

National Employee Health and Fitness Day



May 16

Breast Cancer Update: Saving Lives With a Touch of Your Fingers, Home Health Aide Continuing Education, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Gayla Hollis, (334) 347-2664, extension 403.

May 17

Anne Smith Seminar, Kellogg Conference Center, Tuskegee, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information contact Jessica Hardy, (334) 206-5226.

May 20

Buckle-Up America! Week



May 22

Does Your Client's Kitchen Have the Right Ingredients? E/D Waiver Case Managers, 8:30-10:30 a.m. For more information contact Carol Heier, (334) 206-5341.



May 24

Making the Change to Safety Needles, ADPH Clinic Inservice, 3-4 p.m. For more information contact Fay Smith, (334) 206-5655.

May 31

World No Tobacco Day

June 7

Alabama's Best Practices Conference, Scrushy Center, Birmingham. For more information contact Bonnie Perry, (334) 444-3111.



June 13

The Pain of Arthritis, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Fay Smith, (334) 206-5655.



June 14

ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m. For more information contact Jim McVay, Dr.P.A., (334) 206-5600.



June 26

PHALCON Update, 3-4:30 p.m. For more information contact Debbie Patterson, (334) 206-5310.



July 11

TB Update, Public Health Staff Development with UAB, 2-4 pm. For more information contact Fay Smith, (334) 206-5655.