

# Alabama's health

*A publication of the Alabama Department of Public Health*

## *1918 Influenza Pandemic Survivors Share Their Stories*

**T**he 1918 influenza pandemic was one of the earliest, perhaps the most traumatic experience, in the life of Annie Laurie Williams, age 91, of Selma. That's because her father, a jeweler, contracted the disease and became very ill. Even though she was a very young child, her father's serious illness remains an indelible memory.

Ann Brantley, R.N., Hazard Vulnerability Analysis Nurse Coordinator of the Center for Emergency Preparedness, interviewed Mrs. Williams and other pandemic influenza survivors for a historical perspective on this devastating event in world history. Vernon Adkins, Nick Moss and Craig Young of the Video Communications Division recorded and edited the interviews with the three survivors: Mrs. Williams, Mr. Garfield Johnson and Mrs. Gurtis Robinson. These colorful stories are being used for Powerpoint presentations and possibly public service announcements about pandemic influenza preparedness.

Mrs. Williams discussed her recollections of those frightful days. She, her mother and her sister feared losing her father and she remembers the doctor paying house calls on him. He suffered "a long, drawn-out illness" with fever, headaches and aching.

"It snowed that winter, and we were absolutely scared to death when he went outside in the snow to look for a ring my mother had lost," Mrs. Williams said.

The pandemic meant some of the businesses in town had to be closed because their employees could not come to work. But Mrs. Williams pointed out that the closures didn't have legal implications of a quarantine, rather, people simply did not want to come out and risk possible exposure to the deadly influenza virus.

Mrs. Williams' mother took good care of her father while he was ill, tried to keep their daughters away from him, prepared

their food, and sometimes greeted well-meaning neighbors who brought food to their door but did not enter their home. Thankfully, her father survived. Her advice to anyone should we experience a pandemic in the 21st century: take your medicine, make sure you have plenty of food and stay at home.

Likewise, Mrs. Gurtis Robinson, 97, of Mineral Springs in Chilton County remembers people staying home during the "terrible times" of the outbreak and that everybody had their hands full at home. "It wasn't just one family; it was everybody."

A complicating factor was that Ms. Robinson's mother was pregnant during the epidemic.

"We just knew we were going to lose her," Ms. Robinson said "She'd get to coughing,

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# In Memoriam - Matthew J. Bolar

Army Specialist Matthew T. Bolar of Montgomery died May 3 in Baghdad, Iraq, during combat operations. Specialist Bolar, 24, had volunteered to serve a second tour of duty of Iraq just two months after he returned to the U.S. On May 14, Matthew was awarded the Bronze Star Medal which is awarded for bravery, acts of merit, or meritorious service. This award is the fourth-highest combat award of the U.S. Armed Forces and the 9th highest military award (including both combat and non-combat awards) in the order of precedence of U.S. military decorations.

After graduating as valedictorian of his class at Canterbury High School and studying at Auburn Montgomery, Specialist Bolar joined the Army in September 2004 and was assigned to Fort Richardson, Alaska, in November 2005. He was a member of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division.

A memorial service was held in Montgomery. The service was bittersweet - a joyful reflection on Matthew's life and the tragedy

of his loss. Touching tributes were offered by family. Adjectives friends used to describe him were "brave," "courageous," and "someone who loved life and the military." Awards were presented by the military and state government. The Patriot Guard Riders were on hand to lend their support.

He was buried May 16 at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

He is the son of Anne and Vernon Adkins of Montgomery and his sister Emma is a student at the University of Alabama. Adkins is an audiovisual specialist in the Video Communications Division and was Matthew's stepfather for 21 years. The family requested that contributions in Matthew's memory be made to Disabled American Veterans or a similar charity that provides services to veterans.

The Adkins address:  
 Vernon and Anne Adkins  
 7755 Halcyon Forest Trail  
 Montgomery 36117



**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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# Strolling for Strokes and Stomp-Out Stroke: Ambassadors Educate Peers

African American men have an increased risk for hypertension as well as other chronic diseases. To increase public awareness about the signs and symptoms of stroke in this population, the department's Cardiovascular Health program and its partner organization, the American Stroke Association, conducted a public awareness campaign at two historically black universities this spring with the message of stroke prevention.

Power To End Stroke is a program developed by the American Stroke Association to provide education and leadership, through

ambassadors, to mobilize the African American community to reduce their risk for stroke.

The campaign recruited ambassadors from fraternities at Tuskegee University and from both fraternities and sororities at Alabama State University, beginning with a Train the Trainer: Power To End Stroke program. During an initial presentation participants were provided a toolkit of materials to educate the ambassadors about stroke. In turn, these ambassadors trained other ambassadors.



*Nursing students volunteered to take blood pressures.*

At Tuskegee, the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity developed a service project and hosted a special event on campus called "Strolling for Strokes." Nursing students conducted blood pressure screenings for men and women. Wallet cards were distributed to assist participants with keeping track of their blood pressure readings, and those with elevated readings were instructed to contact a physician. More than 300 people participated in the event at Tuskegee, and a total of 39 Power To End Stroke ambassadors were recruited there.

At Alabama State University in Montgomery, the program staff worked through the Panhellenic Council to involve members of all five fraternities on campus in its men's health initiative

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1.888.4.stroke ♥ www.strokeassociation.org

ADPH  
Alabama Department of Public Health

American Heart Association

American Stroke Association

POWER TO END STROKE

**WE HAVE THE POWER TO END STROKE**

*A billboard campaign involving fraternity ambassadors helped draw more than 300 participants to an event at Tuskegee University.*

# Alabama Public Health Association Honors Professionals

**T**he Alabama Public Health Association recently recognized persons from across the state who demonstrated exceptional merit during the past year in the field of public health. The following individuals were presented awards at the association's 51st Annual Meeting and Health Education Conference at the Riverview Plaza Hotel in Mobile May 17.

**Gayle Lees Sandlin** of Montgomery was presented the Dr. Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence in Public Health. Ms. Sandlin began her career in social work with the Alabama Department of Human Resources in 1970. From that time, until she became an employee of the Alabama Department of Public Health in 1988, she was involved with social services in a variety of settings, and has demonstrated outstanding performance in many settings.



*Gayle Lees Sandlin*

Ms. Sandlin has been a major driving force in the development and implementation of the Children's Health Insurance Program for the state. In fact, under her leadership Alabama was the first state in the country to have its state plan approved and the first to enroll children. One support letter states, "This program is recognized as a national model – so much so that this year when the program is up for Congressional Reauthorization, Gayle has been called on to testify before national groups, including congressional hearings."

This award was established to honor Dr. Myers for his accomplishments by recognizing an individual, group or organization who, through excellence in work, has made a significant impact on some aspect of public health in Alabama.

The Dr. D.G. Gill Award, which is intended to honor an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to public health in Alabama, was presented to **Gwendolyn Lipscomb** of Montgomery. This award was the first award established by the association and was so done in 1967 to honor a former State Health Officer, Dr. D.G. Gill.

Ms. Lipscomb began her public health career in 1984 as a public health nurse in Monroe County. Her dedication to the home health patients there "simply became the mantra" for her tenure in public health. Throughout her public health career she

has worked to improve health care access and services in the state.



*Gwendolyn Lipscomb*

Ms. Lipscomb currently serves as the Director of the Office of Minority Health and in that role touches the lives of many people throughout the state and nation. "A key strength is her ability to bring the community together through her strong networking ability," one support letter stated. She has worked tirelessly in securing grants and other opportunities to improve the health of racial and ethnic minorities to eliminate disparities in health programs and indicators. Her good work is documented by the numerous letters of support from community groups, faith-

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# Madison County Health Department Kicks Off 2007 Farmers Market Nutrition Program

A farm motif and a tasting table consisting of items made of farm-fresh fruits and vegetables highlighted the kickoff of the Farmers Market Nutrition Program in Madison County, which started on May 4. All WIC employees dressed in farmer attire to accentuate the barnyard theme.

With the help of Madison County Health Officer Dr. Larry Robey who printed out posters, WIC nutritionists Kashera Sims, M.S., R.D., and Marilyn Agee, N.A., put a barnyard display together. A tasting table was laid out for all to try, featuring fruit, smoothies, crackers and spinach dip.

Debbie Blanchard-Ruff, R.D., L.D., led a story hour which promoted the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. Nutrition Director

Pat Winn, Area 2, said, "The children really enjoyed participating and responded positively."

The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program provides fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants. Women and children who have been certified to receive WIC program benefits are eligible to participate in the program.

Eligible WIC participants are issued WIC FMNP coupons in addition to their regular WIC food instruments. These coupons can be used to buy fresh, unprepared fruits and vegetables from farmers, farmers' markets or roadside stands that have been approved to accept coupons.



Children entering the Madison County Health Department enjoyed the "barnyard" display employees created and seeing WIC staff dressed in farm clothing.



Debbie Blanchard-Ruff, R.D., L.D., leads a story hour to promote the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

## Retirees

The following department employees have retired recently:

*May*

**Marquerite Seymer** - Pickens County Health Department  
**Sherry Trawick** - Public Health Area X

*June*

**June Cox** - Bibb County Health Department  
**Phyllis McCalman** - Bureau of Home & Community Services  
**Agatha Mullins** - Baldwin County Health Department  
**Charles Oliver** - Dale County Health Department

## *Survivors, cont'd from page 1....*

and we had to work and work with her to get her to breathe, but she did make it.”

A third survivor was Garfield Johnson, 93, of Antioch in Coffee County. Johnson’s father was ill with influenza and remembers that his dad lost consciousness “for three days and three nights.” He told of widespread fear of contracting influenza.

“It was very contagious, and the groceries would go to a very low place,” Mr. Johnson recalled. “You younger folks can’t imagine how crude it was out here. Sure can’t. I was told of complete families that died with it and they would have nobody to bury them. Even the schools shut down.”

Two of the persons interviewed are related to Center for Emergency Preparedness employees; Mrs. Williams is the mother-in-law of Lynn Williams and Mrs. Robinson is the grandmother of Alice Floyd, R.N. Mr. Johnson is the father-in-law of Max Stagner of the Department of Insurance.

Excerpts from these interviews were presented by Dr. Charles Woernle, Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention, at the Degussa’s International Pandemic Influenza Symposium in Mobile. Some of the other groups which have received the pandemic influenza presentations include the following:

Alabama County Commission Association  
Alabama City Clerks and Administrators Associations  
Alabama Department of Public Safety  
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services  
Alabama School Board Association  
Alabama Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters  
Child Care Directors  
Rotary Clubs  
The Southern Company

The influenza pandemic of 1918 killed half a million people in the U.S., including more than 12,000 Alabamians. Estimates are that the next pandemic influenza outbreak could kill 2 million Americans, including 28,000 Alabamians and infect up to 30 percent of the U.S. population.

In the future, closing schools before the virus is in the community would be one of the best defenses against such a major influenza outbreak, so the Center for Emergency Preparedness has conducted a series of school closure tabletop exercises to discuss ways of curbing the spread of possible outbreaks.

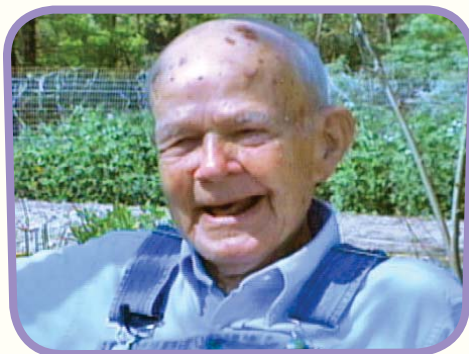
In the 20th century, there were three pandemic flu outbreaks in the U.S. -- the worst being the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic.

Pandemics occur when the flu virus undergoes such dramatic changes that no one has any immunity to the new virus.

Cindy Lesinger, pandemic influenza coordinator, said that the length of school closings in a community would be based upon the death rate among the population of those infected. So if 2 percent or more people are infected and die, the schools might be closed for up to three months. While closing schools would help slow the spread of a flu epidemic, the economic costs would be staggering to the local economy.

If you have a family member or friend, aged 90 years or more who remembers the 1918 Spanish Influenza and was living in Alabama in 1918, please contact Ann Brantley at 334-206-3394. or [annbrantley@adph.state.al.us](mailto:annbrantley@adph.state.al.us). The Center for Emergency Preparedness would like to add them to its video records.

For more information about local pandemic influenza planning, contact your county health department. Portions of the interviews are available at [adph.org/pandemicflu](http://adph.org/pandemicflu).



*Garfield Johnson*



*Gurtis Robinson*



*Annie Laurie Williams*

# Summerize Your Road Trip - Tips for Fun and Safe Summer Travel

During the summer months Alabamians fill the roadways with their excited families in motor vehicles headed for long anticipated summer vacations. Along with planning ahead and making sure that your car is serviced, you should also be sure that your family is ready for the road. The Alabama Department of Public Health encourages travelers to buckle up, use appropriate child restraints and practice safe habits while on vacation this summer.

## No Ride is Complete Without a Car Seat

Children are always imitating behaviors of their parents and buckling up is a great habit to acquire. As a parent and primary operator of the car, a safety belt should be worn at all times. When traveling with kids, ensure their safety by properly buckling them in child safety restraints appropriate for their age and weight. Proper use of seat belts and appropriate car seats reduces the risk of injury and death in a motor vehicle crash. Currently, motor vehicle crashes are responsible for more than half of the unintentional injury deaths in Alabama.

Child safety seats, including boosters, are very effective in protecting children in crashes. A booster seat positions the adult-designed seat belt correctly and safely - and offers children greater comfort and visibility. Big kids are a priority too, and children age 12 and under should always be in the back seat. The vehicle's manual and the safety seat instructions are excellent tools to use to ensure that car seats are installed correctly.

Alabama law states that each front-seat occupant of a "passenger car" shall have a safety belt properly fastened about his/her body any time the vehicle is in motion. The law also requires use of child safety restraint systems. Under the conditions of the law, every person who is transporting a child up to the age of 15 in a motor vehicle that is registered in this state shall properly restrain such children in a child passenger restraint system that meets federal standards.

The size appropriate restraint system required for a child shall include all of the following:

- (1) Birth to Age 1 or 20 pounds: Infant only seats and convertible seats used in the rear facing position.
- (2) Age 1 or 20 pounds to age 5 or 40 pounds: Convertible seats in the forward position or forward facing seats.

(3) Age 5 or 10 pounds to age 6: Booster seats.

(4) Age 6 to Age 15: Seat belts

## Give your kids a 'boost'

Many caring parents are unaware of what a booster seat is or its purpose. A booster seat is a type of vehicle restraint that lifts children up so that the lap and shoulder harness of a seat belt fits them properly across the hips, chest and shoulder. Seat belts are designed for adults, not children. A child, who cannot sit with his or her back straight against the vehicle seat back cushion, with knees bent over a vehicle's seat edge without slouching, must use a booster seat. Beginning at around age 4, many children are too large for toddler seats, but too small for adult safety belts. All children who are 40 pounds and under 8 years of age, unless they are 4'9" tall, should be in a booster seat to ensure a proper fit in the vehicle's seat belt system. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

Remember:

- A booster seat needs to be used every time your child travels, no matter the distance or destination.
- The back seat is the safest place for all children to ride.
- Always secure an empty booster seat in place.
- Never allow a child to place the shoulder belt behind his or her back or under an arm.

Using booster seats ensure the car's safety belt fits a child correctly and can aid in avoiding serious injury if an accident occurs.

By Victoria Broussard



## *Awards, cont'd from page 4...*

based organizations and other health care professionals.

The Frederick S. Wolf Award was presented to **Kendal Chad Kent** of Escambia County. This award was established in 1982 to recognize an individual who has been active in public health at the local level for more than 10 years; who has demonstrated efficiency, dedication and professionalism in delivery of public health services; and who has provided unselfish community services in areas unrelated to public health.

One letter of support stated, "From day one, his dedication and commitment to the program was obvious. Chad believed in this program and saw the potential public health benefits." That



*Kendal Chad Kent*

philosophy has followed every role that he has pursued throughout his public health career. Kent currently serves as the Emergency Preparedness coordinator for Public Health Area 9. In this role he works with medical, civic, emergency and governmental providers and organizations throughout the eight counties of Southwest Alabama. This program is vital to the success of emergency response plans in

the area and he has done an outstanding job in bringing various entities to the consensus table.



*David Newman*

**David Newman** of Computer Systems Center in Montgomery was presented the Virginia Kendrick Award. This award is given annually to an individual who has provided notable service to the people of Alabama while serving in a supportive position in the field of public health. As the Support Desk Manager Newman received many letters of support with remarks about his "can do" attitude and his constant dedication to not only getting the job done but his spirit of helpfulness and cooperation. A major project for which he was responsible for providing technical support was the Children's Health Insurance Program with its many needs for specific design and short deadlines. Many adjectives were utilized to describe Newman, such as: patient, gentle as a dove, total commitment, spirit that radiates, self assurance, always there to help, invaluable to the department.

**Sandy Jackson** of Lawrence County was presented the Guy M. Tate Award, an award presented annually to a public health employee, group or agency with 10 years or less in public health for

outstanding current or recent service or contribution to public health. Ms. Jackson is an employee of the Lawrence County Health Department. She is an administrative support assistant and works in the clinic programs. Her many letters of support resound with documentation of her performance beyond the job assignment in all that she does in her important role in the department. She always works long hours and volunteers for extra work when the clinic hours go beyond the normal workday. She has been called on many times to help teach employees



*Sandy Jackson*

new systems to help the clinic flow more efficiently and has done so in a spirit of cooperation and willingness. Area leaders have recognized her organizational skills. One letter of support complimented her for her constant willingness to work with new employees and to help them learn the skills needed for their job.

The Alabama Public Health Association presented **Kassi Michelle Webster** of Tuscaloosa the Ira L. Myers Scholarship at the University of Alabama at Birmingham where she is pursuing a Master of Public Health degree with a concentration in health behavior. Ms. Webster is a magna cum laude graduate of UAB.



# Summer Scorecard Rewards Youth for Physical Activity

**S**uper Saturday: Super-Sizing Fun & Fitness Day kicked off The VERB Scorecard Campaign sponsored by Steps to a Healthier Alabama in the River Region and Southeast Alabama. The event was held on May 19 at Auburn Montgomery.

Childhood obesity is a looming health problem so this campaign is stressing the importance of physical activity, especially during summer months. Numerous demonstrations at the event illustrated ways young people can be active, such as by running and jumping rope.

The VERB Scorecard Campaign inspires youth ages 5 to 14 to be physically active. It provides ideas and resources to help young people find ways to get active, and provides opportunities for them to add physical activity in their everyday lives.

STEPS Program Manager Heidi Hataway said, "We encourage parents to talk with their children about physical activities they might like and to try a new activity with them. We find that children respond to the spirit of adventure and discovery. Some youth prefer competitive activities while others simply like playing a game with friends. All youth will experience the rewards of being active if it is enjoyable for them."

Sponsors offer the VERB Scorecard, and it also can be printed from the department's Web site. Young people can fill out their cards in the following ways:

- Be active for at least one hour at home or with their family. Parents then initial a box verifying that the hour's physical activity was completed.
- Be active for at least one hour at summer camp, and the camp counselor can fill in one of the boxes
- Participate in any of the VERB events or use the scorecard to get a discount at one of the VERB sponsors. The event director or discount vendor can fill in one of the boxes.

At the end of the summer vacation, participants will be eligible for "cool" prizes. The more cards they have filled out, the greater their chances of winning.

Regular physical activity helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles, helps reduce the risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases, and promotes psychological well-being. The number of overweight children aged 6 to 19 in the U.S. has tripled in the past 40 years. Obesity during childhood and adolescence is associated with obesity during adulthood.

The VERB Scorecard Campaign is an initiative of Steps to a Healthier Alabama and partnering agencies. The Steps River Region program includes Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes, Macon and Montgomery counties. The Steps Southeast Alabama includes Barbour and Pike counties.

The Web site address for the VERB Scorecard is <http://www.adph.org/scorecard>.

## VERB PRIZE DRAWINGS

Learn more at [www.adph.org/scorecard](http://www.adph.org/scorecard)

**VERB SUMMER SCORECARD PERMISSION FORM**  
 Verb Summer Scorecard is your child's ticket to a fun, active summer. By completing 60 minutes of any physical activity a day, your child can get a box checked on the scorecard. When the scorecard is complete, your child can return it to a program sponsor or mail it to the address below and get a cool prize. Your child can complete up to three scorecards this summer. Returned scorecards will be entered into a drawing for prizes at a final celebration in August. For more about the program, dates and locations of activities, and special deals, go to [www.adph.org/scorecard](http://www.adph.org/scorecard).

**Parent Signature Required for Participation**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade this fall \_\_\_\_\_

School this fall \_\_\_\_\_

Male/Female \_\_\_\_\_ (Race Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize my child to participate in the VERB Summer Scorecard Program. Participation is voluntary. As with all vigorous physical activity, there is some risk. I believe that my child is physically able to participate in this program without unusual risk. However, I hereby release and hold harmless the Alabama Department of Public Health, the sponsoring organizations, and offices of each from any injury sustained by my child while participating.

Parent Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Help us learn more about youth in our community by answering this question (optional):  
 Think about the average week during this school year. How many days of the week does your child do a physical activity or play a sport, NOT including PE?

0 days     1 day     2 days     3 days  
 4 days     5 days     6 days     7 days

Return your signed permission form to a program sponsor, or mail it to: **Steps Program Office**  
 P.O. Box 303017  
 Montgomery, AL 36130-3017

## VERB SUMMER SCORECARD

WHAT'S YOUR VERB?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Have fun this summer doing your favorite verbs and fill in all 24 boxes of your scorecard. When you turn in your filled scorecard you can get cool Verb stuff!

Your parent or any scorecard sponsor can initial one scorecard square each time you play for an hour. Only one square can be initialized per day.

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24

Return your completed scorecard to a program sponsor, or mail it to: **Steps Program Office**  
 P.O. Box 303017  
 Montgomery, AL 36130-3017

This is the 1st 2nd 3rd (circle one) completed scorecard I have turned in

*Stroke, cont'd from page 3....*

which the college students named "Stomp-Out Stroke." More than 15 ambassadors were trained and more than 100 persons attended.

The Cardiovascular Health Branch utilized the Power To End Stroke ambassadors during the month of May to increase media awareness through radio announcements and billboards. Ambassadors from both universities were pictured on billboards located along interstate highways and city roads. An ambassador from Alabama State University lent his voice for the radio public service announcements.

Publicity was provided beforehand with billboards and radio announcements. On the day of the event there was a radio remote broadcast from urban contemporary station WZHT Radio, Hot 105.

For more information contact the Cardiovascular Health Branch, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease, (334) 206-7063 or visit [www.adph.org/cvh](http://www.adph.org/cvh).



*Smooth moves are demonstrated at Tuskegee University.*



*This billboard depicted sorority and fraternity members from Alabama State University.*

## Morgan County, Infant Saved Thanks to Nurses' Quick Actions

**O**n April 2, a 9-month-old infant experienced respiratory and cardiac arrest at Morgan County Health Department. The infant was brought to WIC Clinic for a nutrition education visit.

The nurse conducting the interview noticed the infant was breathing irregularly and the color of the infant was not good. A few minutes into the interview she noticed the child was not breathing, so she called for help.

Betty Moore, RN, came to her assistance immediately. The infant was assessed, 911 was called, and Ms. Moore started CPR. The infant was taken to the local hospital and then transferred to Children's Hospital in Birmingham.

Karen Butler, Area 2 director of nursing, noted, "The clinical staff of Morgan County Health Department should be commended for their quick response in saving this infant's life."

## Commendations

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*.

### **Diane Beeson**

Tobacco Prevention & Control  
from Sherry Bradley  
Montgomery, Ala.

### **Theresa Mulkey**

Center for Health Statistics  
from Major Jimmy "Vegas" Canlas  
Korea

### **Kathie Peters**

Center for Health Statistics  
from Hugo Meridez  
Fayetteville, Ariz.

### **Georgia Reynolds**

Center for Health Statistics  
from Louis F. McAboy  
Novi, Mich.

### **Reginald Strickland**

Center for Health Statistics  
from Rep. Charles Newton  
Greenville, Ala.

### **Geneva Thomas**

Center for Health Statistics  
from Martha Gauntt Brannon  
Mobile, Ala.

### **Jemekia Walker**

Bureau of Home & Community Services  
from Pamela Melton & other  
Jefferson County Waiver Staff  
Birmingham, Ala.

### **John Wible**

General Counsel  
from Circuit Judge Robbie T. Beal  
Franklin, Tenn.

## New Web Site Helps Eliminate 'Knowledge Deficit' on Health Insurance

Gov. Bob Riley and State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson announced the creation of a new Web site to help Alabama consumers learn more about health insurance and the variety of plans available in the state.

As a joint effort between the Governor's Black Belt Action Commission and the department, the site helps consumers better understand health insurance terminology, resources and possible tax benefits. The web address for the site is <http://healthinsurance.alabama.gov/>.

"Health insurance is a very complex subject that impacts us all. This Web site is an innovative, common sense approach that helps eliminate the knowledge deficit when it comes to this complicated issue," said Gov. Riley. "It's another example of the kind of successes our Black Belt Action Commission has produced, but this one will help citizens throughout the state."

Dr. Williamson said, "We applaud this initiative because the Web site will provide Alabamians practical guidance in selecting

the best health insurance for their needs and will provide them the protection they need for themselves, their families and their employees."

The user-friendly Web site provides information about health insurance plans available in Alabama. The site also provides tax calculators for employers and individuals so they can see the possible tax benefits of providing health insurance for their employees or of purchasing health insurance for themselves and their families.

A series of focus groups conducted in six Black Belt counties, the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey data on Alabama's uninsured rate, and needs identified by key health care stakeholders led to the creation of the Web site.

The Web site is housed and will be maintained within the department's Office of Primary Care and Rural Health.


For more information on the BBAC, please visit [www.blackbeltaction.alabama.gov](http://www.blackbeltaction.alabama.gov).

## Breastfeeding Q&A

### Do mothers have to follow a special diet while breastfeeding?

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

# Calendar of Events

June 29  Satellite Conf & Web Cast  
**Mass Shelters: Environmental  
Health Issues, 12 noon-1:30 p.m.**

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

July 19  Satellite Conf & Web Cast  
**Pandemic Influenza Information  
for First Responders: The Basics,  
12 noon-1:30 p.m.**

For more information contact  
Alice Floyd, (334) 206-3898.

August 2  Satellite Conf & Web Cast  
**ADPH Statewide  
Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.**

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

June 16  Satellite Conf & Web Cast  
**Taking a Sexual History, 2-4 p.m.,  
Title X Family Planning Training**

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

July 18  Satellite Conf & Web Cast  
**Home Health Aides  
and Attendants, 2-4 p.m.**

For more information contact  
Debbie Buchanan, (334) 206-5711.

July 24  Satellite Conf & Web Cast  
**Adolescent Risk  
Behaviors, 1-3 p.m.**

For more information contact  
Sandy Powell, (334) 206-5050.

August 10  Satellite Conf & Web Cast  
**The Pharmacist's Role in  
Disasters, 12 noon-1:30 p.m.**

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