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A Message from the State Health Officer

None of us can escape the effects of the national tragedies of Sept. 11. Even though President Bush has encouraged all Americans to “work hard like you always do,” it is difficult to return to business as usual. I commend our public health nurses who are volunteering with the American Red Cross in New York City and so many others who are giving of themselves during this challenging time.

Many health departments are receiving calls from the public about the need for anthrax or smallpox vaccination, our Radiological Health team is staying alert as nuclear power plants are at higher security, and public health employees are playing an integral role in preparing for possible bioterrorism.

In recent years there has been increased concern about the risk of terrorist events, and experts have said that a bioterrorism attack is inevitable in this country. A task force was established in 1999 to prepare for terrorism, with bioterrorism addressed specifically. Our staff is working with others including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Alabama Bureau of Investigation, the Alabama Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Included are officials from neighboring states that might be impacted by a terrorist event in Alabama.

The state's four major cities (Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile and Montgomery) and specific sites such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Anniston Army Depot and the state's two nuclear power plants have been identified as potential targets.

Surveillance of agents of terrorism such as smallpox and anthrax would become the hallmark of a bioterrorism response, and the ability to communicate with all health

care providers would be crucial. The department would coordinate with hospitals and other entities to address bioterrorism.

Our partnership with CDC is critically important in combating bioterrorism. A CDC push pallet is available containing antimicrobials, intravenous fluids and other items likely to be needed in a bioterrorism attack. Training is another valuable component, with 44 hospitals implementing training and 40 health department sites currently trained. The department has received almost \$3 million in federal funding for this project.

The Bureau of Clinical Laboratories is upgrading its ability to handle organisms that require Biosafety Level 3 containment. The Health Alert Network, operated by the Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease, will transmit through secure downlinks, health information and instruction/training to each local health department and health care provider/organization in the state.

Training by the Health Alert Network has moved the focus from initial awareness training to proficiency-type training tailored to specific responder audiences. This type of training is designed to be delivered to diverse audiences from infection control personnel to those who work in emergency room settings. Satellite downlink training events have been held to permit access of each local health department and health care provider across the state to information and training presented by the department.

In addition, current status evaluation and planning are being conducted in cooperation with the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health. An advisory committee was formed of member/leaders of groups across the state whose members would likely be

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involved in either preparation or response to a terrorist act.

This group will administer a survey to assess the current state of readiness of Alabama for any terrorist activity. It will also undertake the completion of the health component of the Department of Justice survey of domestic preparedness, whose completion is a responsibility of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency. Finally, it will address directions in which the department should move to improve the ability of the state to confront any public health emergency that may result from terrorist activity. This includes an assessment of the need for training of personnel from first responders to emergency room physicians.

While the impetus for these activities has been bioterrorism preparedness, other important outcomes include enhanced capability of the state to respond to any public health emergency, improved laboratory capacity for other investigations and improved communication among departmental offices and other providers.

Smallpox and anthrax vaccines are not recommended

The public is concerned that precautions might need to be taken to prevent the spread of smallpox or anthrax. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has prepared a plan with regard to both potential threats that officials say “prepares us for today, a year from now, and for the future.”

The disease of smallpox was eradicated from the world more than 20 years ago, but some smallpox virus still exists in laboratories. Although there is a vaccine effective against smallpox, vaccination against smallpox is not routinely recommended for the general public to prevent the disease and therefore is not available. In the event of smallpox virus being released by terrorists, the United States has a limited supply of smallpox vaccine that would be made available for post-exposure containment.

Vaccination against anthrax is also not recommended for the general public to prevent disease and it is not available. Anthrax does not spread from person to person. In addition, persons exposed to anthrax can be treated with an antibiotic. The existing national stockpile of medical supplies would be used to treat persons in the remote chance they were exposed.

The CDC has established a bioterrorism-related telephone line for questions related to anthrax and smallpox. The phone number is 404-639-2807. Also, the CDC’s bioterrorism website at www.bt.cdc.gov has information on this subject.

Donald Williamson, M.D.

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
- Toni Prater Graphic Designer
- Marion Wilford Photographer

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

ADPH Women's Health reaches out to young women across the state

The Public Health Nursing Section began its Young Women's Health Initiative through a mentoring program using community based projects which involve young women across the state in July 2000. Through this initiative three young women were selected to attend the National Young Women's Health Summit in Alexandria, Va., Aug. 3-5, 2000, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health.

This year the girls participated in the national effort to involve young women in health initiatives by attending the Office of Women's Health East Coast Young Women's Health Summit in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., July 11-13.

The goal of this summit was to bring back the young women and their mentors who attended the national summit in Alexandria last year to discuss their community based projects, what worked and what did not work. Brittany Boyte, a teenager from Atmore, was one of the returning selected young women. Brittany presented her projects at the summit and has continued her work by partnering with Angie Rolin-Taylor, Disease Intervention supervisor at Escambia County Health Department.

Angie and Brittany have teamed up with other community groups to inform other young women as well as the youth population in their area of today's health issues. The South West Alabama Community Planning Group in conjunction with the Escambia County School System's Community Health Component Project will be conducting a Youth Health Summit at the Houston Avery Park in Atmore on Oct. 20, 2001. This project will also be supported by the Escambia Allied Health Committee and the Progressive Civic and Recreation Club. Area businesses and organizations have already pledged support for this endeavor.

This will be the second year for the event which will offer information on a variety of health issues concerning teens. In order to determine which issues youth would like to address at the summit, a youth focus groups is planned for Oct. 2, 2001. The focus group will be led by Brittany, who remains involved with the Women's Health Initiative. Wallace Nesmith, a guidance counselor from one of the local schools who works directly with the community Health Component, will be the co-leader of the focus group.

This focus group will provide needed information



Brittany Boyte presents her project.

concerning HIV and related health issues which teens face. Information gathered from this group will be used to compile the Community Health Component Project's need assessment as well as provide data for the South West Alabama Community Planning Group's annual HIV prevention plan.

For more information on the Young Women's Mentoring Program, contact Jessica Hardy, Assistant State Nursing Director, Public Health Nursing Section, Office of Professional and Support Services, RSA Tower, Suite 1010, Montgomery Ala. 36130, 334 206-5526.

By JESSICA HARDY

Influenza vaccine will be available for high-risk patients in October; for others beginning Nov. 1

Vaccine delivery delays are expected to take place during the 2001-2002 influenza season. Because of the limited supply of vaccine which will initially be available, during October the Alabama Department of Public Health will administer influenza vaccine only to persons at high risk.

Beginning Nov. 1, county health departments may begin to administer influenza vaccine to all other persons.

Influenza vaccines are highly recommended for persons at highest risk of complications including the following:

- those 65 years of age and older;
- residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities that house persons of any age who have chronic medical conditions;
- adults and children with chronic disorders of the pulmonary or cardiovascular systems, including asthma;

- adults and children who had required regular medical follow up or hospitalization during the preceding year because of chronic metabolic diseases (including diabetes mellitus), renal dysfunction, hemoglobinopathies, or immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by human immunodeficiency virus);

- children and teenagers (aged 6 months-18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and, therefore, might be at risk for developing Reye syndrome after influenza infection;

- women who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the influenza season;

- health care workers in a hospital, emergency, outpatient, or nursing home setting; and

- health care workers who deliver care to high-risk patients in their homes.

Employees selected for Leadership Institute

Ten Alabama Department of Public Health employees were selected as 2001-2002 scholars in the South Central Public Health Leadership Institute (SCPHLI). The institute is sponsored by Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Its mission is to enhance and develop leadership skills through education and individual growth.

Scholars participate from the public health departments in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. Three on-site sessions are planned for this class: Mississippi in October; Alabama in March; Arkansas in September; where they will hear speakers of national renown. Other aspects of the year-long course of study include directed readings, conference calls and a satellite conference. Each class also completes a project and presents it at the final onsite session.

“SCPHLI is an investment in the present and future leadership of the Alabama Department of Public Health,” said Frances Kenamer, director of the Management Support Unit of the Office of Professional and Support Services. “It is part of a larger, nationwide initiative, Workforce Development, to assure a well-trained and competent public health workforce.”

For more information, please contact Ms. Kenamer at 334-206-5226, fkenamer@adph.state.al.us.



Shown are Renae Carpenter, social work manager, Clarke County Health Department; Printella Ridgeway-Thomas, M.D., pediatrician, Jefferson County Health Department; Peggy Blakeney, assistant area administrator, Houston County Health Department; Cheryl Browder, health educator, Division of Epidemiology; Jessica Hardy, assistant state public health nursing director, Office of Professional Services; Grover Wedgeworth, director, Bureau of Home and Community Services; Ronnie Russell, environmentalist, DeKalb County Health Department; seated, Rebecca Moten, social work manager, Montgomery County Health Department; Linda Stinson, family planning care coordinator, Etowah County Health Department. Not pictured is Robert Jones, environmental director, Public Health Area 7.

East Wilcox Farmers Market enjoys bountiful first year

Each Wednesday and Saturday morning from June through September the East Wilcox Farmers Market has offered locally grown fruits and vegetables to the public. The first full year of the market, initiated through a collaborative community effort, has been a real success.

“This environmental intervention asked ‘how do we make it easier for people to make healthful food choices,’ and beginning a local farmers market in that rural area was a winning option,” said Heidi Hataway, assistant director of the department’s Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit. “Not only does this market offer easier access to the homegrown fruits and vegetables for the people, it encourages the local farmers to grow and sell their products. This improves the quality of life for the community.”

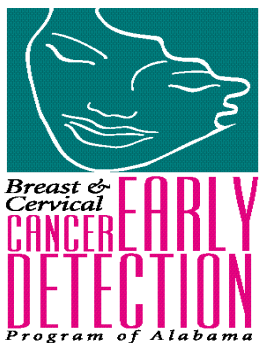
An opening day celebration was held June 2 at the Pine Apple Health Center. The public heard comments from community leaders, picked up the latest health information, and enjoyed a fun walk and games for children.

Sponsoring the collaborative project are the Wilcox County Health Project, Partners in Progress, the Wilcox County Extension System, the State Farmers Market Authority and the department’s Cardiovascular Health Program.



Watermelons galore were available.

New legislation benefits women with breast and cervical cancer



An estimated 100 Alabama women each year who develop breast or cervical cancer will benefit from a new law that pays for their treatment.

Effective Oct. 1 the Alabama Medicaid Agency will pay to treat uninsured women up to age 65 who are diagnosed with either disease through the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early

Detection Program. Coverage includes women who are in need of treatment for breast or cervical cancer, including precancerous conditions of the breast or cervix and early stage cancer.

To be eligible, women must be uninsured and meet income requirements. A woman in a family of four, for example, would be eligible with a family income of up to \$35,300, which is twice the federal poverty level. Experimental treatments are not covered. Program eligibility ends when the woman’s course of treatment is completed or the state determines a woman no longer meets eligibility requirements.

The Legislature gave final passage to the act and Gov.

Don Siegelman signed it into law in May. An estimated 2,900 women in Alabama will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year and 600 are expected to die from the disease. About 200 Alabama women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer this year, and about 85 women are expected to die from the disease in 2001.

The federal Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act of 2001 allows states to provide full Medicaid benefits to these eligible women. Previously, uninsured women who could not afford medical care were provided cancer treatment through the charity of the medical community.

For program information contact Deborah Pennington at (334) 947-6206.

Help Alabama citizens to prepare for future health needs: Health, legal professionals team up for LIFEPLAN 2001

Gov. Don Siegelman has signed a proclamation making October LIFEPLAN 2001 month. Throughout the month of October medical and legal professionals all over the state will be hosting public meetings to encourage people to plan for their future health care needs. Advance directives (living wills) and organ donation will be the focus of these programs, which are free to participants.

“LIFEPLAN seminars will be held in almost every county of the state,” said Fred D. Gray, Esquire, president-elect of the Alabama State Bar. “Making sure your family and friends know what medical care you would want or not want in the last days of your life is so important, and it’s something everyone should think about now while they are still healthy. We’re hoping these seminars will provide the information people need to make informed choices and to document these choices.”

LIFEPLAN 2001 is being sponsored by the Alabama State Bar, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama and the Alabama Hospital Association, with support from the department and the Alabama Organ Center.

Representing the sponsoring organizations at the news conference were: Larry W. Morris, Esquire, president and Fred D. Gray, Esquire, president-elect, Alabama State Bar; Dr. Jon Sanford, president, Medical Association of the State of Alabama; Keith Granger, chairman of the board of trustees, Alabama Hospital Association; the Hon. Gorman Houston, Associate Justice, Supreme Court of Alabama; Dr. Donald Williamson, Alabama State Health Officer; and Chuck Patrick, MHA, CPTC, executive director, Alabama Organ Center.

To attend a LIFEPLAN 2001 event, you can call (800) 354-6151 for a site near you or go to www.alapubhealth.org. This Web site also has a free LIFEPLAN 2001 Consumer Guide that you can print. The guides will be distributed at the local meetings.

Network engineer receives employee award

David Newman, associate IT Systems Specialist with the Computer Systems Center, was named Central Office Employee of the Month for July. Recognition was made at the September staff meeting.

His former supervisor, Eric B. Rudolph, states, “David is a competent and reliable employee that I am proud to say is a most valued asset to the Support Desk team. His initiative and attention to detail make him an ideal employee and exemplify the type of leadership needed here on the Support Desk.”

Employees praise Newman’s helpfulness, and he is often commended by his coworkers and the users he supports. His performance ratings consistently exceed work standards.

Newman’s responsibilities have changed recently. He has been promoted to network engineer and is assigned to three units: the Children’s Health Insurance Program, the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories in Montgomery, and the Division of Public Health Operation Resources Management (formerly called the ADPH Warehouse Operations).

An avid world traveler, this employee of the month



David Newman was recognized.

keeps photographs and a model of a German castle at his work station to remind him of his trips to the Alps and other scenic locations.

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*.

Amy Abrams, L.B.S.W.
Marengo County Health Department

from Lucy S. Gallman, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.
Livingston, Ala.
Mary E. Holmes, L.G.W.S.
Selma, Ala.

Susan Albertoli
Evelyn Finklea
Monroe County Health Department

from Lynne B. Noah, R.N.
Evergreen, Ala.

Sara Bowman
Dorothy Strickland
Health Provider Standards

from Susan A. Jones, R.N., M.S.N.
Montgomery, Ala.

Debbie Carver
Hale County Health Department

from Lucy S. Gallman, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., P.I.P.
Livingston, Ala.

Hazel Davis
Gwen Harris
Carlisha Lane
Sheila Martin
Priscilla Vinson
Center for Health Statistics

from Claudia Adams
Holt, Fla.

Jackie Esty
Betty Thomas
Center for Health Statistics

from Jerry Jason Praytor
Address unlisted

Angie Garnett
Autauga County Health Department

from Dollie Hambrick, M.S.W.
Professional and Support Services

Nina Haynes
Center for Health Statistics

from Matt L.
Address unlisted

Mary Alice Henson
Monroe County Health Department

from Donna J. Hall
Monroeville, Ala.

Mary Holmes
Mary Meyers
Constance Phillips
Tara Utsey
Clara Williams
Dallas County Health Department

from Dollie Hambrick, M.S.W.
Professional and Support Services

Angela McCray
Pike County Health Department

from Dollie Hambrick, M.S.W.
Professional and Support Services

James K. Reid, R.N., B.S.N., M.S.
Health Provider Standards

from Terry Smith
Centreville, Ala.

Pat Rutland
Center for Health Statistics

from Mrs. Peter Mize
Lake Isabella, Calif.

Reginald Strickland
Center for Health Statistics

from Ralph C. Youngblood
Columbus, Miss.

Retirements

Linda Cates, Butler County Health Department, Sept. 1

Vivian Moon, Marshall County Health Department, Oct. 1

October is Breast Cancer Control Month,
Child Health Month, Family Health
Month.

Calendar of Events



October 4-5

New Horizons-New Challenges: 14th Annual Alabama AIDS Symposium, Civic Center, Montgomery. For more information contact Brenda Cummings, (334) 206-5364, or Tony Thompson, (334) 272-6666.



October 5

Alabama AIDS Symposium, 20 Years Later: Educators, Youth and Parents Join Hands, Jacksonville High School HIV/AIDS Community Planning Course, Jacksonville, Ala., 10-11:30 a.m. For more information contact Brenda Cummings, (334) 206-5364.



October 10

Current Standards for Management of Breast Cancer: A Multi-Discipline Approach, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Fay Smith, (334) 206-5655.



October 11

Flexible Employees' Benefit Plan. For more information contact Sandra Wood, (334) 206-5284.



October 23-24

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Ga.



November 1

Diabetes Mellitus Type II: The Growing Epidemic, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Mim Gaines, (334) 206-5649.



November 6

Genetics for the Public's Health, 12 noon-3 p.m. For more information contact Jeanine Parker, (334) 260-3400.



November 7

Topic to be Announced, Home Health Aide/Home Attendant Continuing Education, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Brenda Elliott, (334) 347-2664, extension 402



November 14

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



December 6

Alabama Department of Public Health Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m. For more information contact Jim McVay, Dr.P.A., Health Promotion and Chronic Disease, (334) 206-5600.



December 12

Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors in Children and Adolescents: Physical Inactivity, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Fay Smith, (334) 206-5655.