The Alabama Department of Public Health Diabetes Branch and the Alabama Diabetes Advisory Council are initiating their 2007 Speakers Bureau. Members of the bureau are encouraging communities to increase partnerships, form coalitions, and engage in activities to work toward reducing prevalence for the disease.

State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson, spoke at the recent Tuskegee Area Health Education Center Inc.'s 4th Annual Diabetes Today community discussion at Tuskegee University. According to Dr. Williamson, the 2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data, reports that more than 20 million people in the United States have diabetes and more than 345,300 people in Alabama are aware they have the disease. The state currently is ranked fourth in prevalence of diabetes in the United States and its territories and one in 10 adults in Alabama has been diagnosed with diabetes.

Health disparities continue to be a concern. According to the Alabama Department of Public Health Center for Health Statistics, over 30 percent of Alabama's counties have five or fewer primary care physicians per 10,000 population, 55 counties do not have an endocrinologist, and 42 counties do not have diabetes educators.

Overweight and obesity continue to be a problem within Alabama. Some 62.6 to 65 percent of adults have a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater that 25. Diabetes accounts for approximately 3 percent of deaths. A major concern, especially with Type II diabetes, is improper diet and a lack of exercise. The 2006 BRFSS data reveals that 27.1 to 30 percent of adults in Alabama engage in no physical activity. The 2005 Youth Behavioral Risk Survey (YRBS) for ninth through twelfth graders revealed that only 45 percent of Alabama students participate in daily physical education classes, compared to 33 percent nationally.

The 2005 BRFSS data indicates that nearly 80 percent of Alabama adults reported not eating enough fruits and vegetables. Adults are not the only ones at risk; the 2005 YRBS indicates that approximately 15 percent of Alabama teens reported that they ate the recommended five or more servings per day of fruits and/or vegetables. These proportions were substantially below the national averages.

Healthful Eating at Restaurants

Eating healthy may be a challenge to people who are on the go and are tempted by convenient fast food restaurants, family-style buffets or large-portioned meals. Alabamians are encouraged to make healthy food choices, ask about portion sizes and check if the menu shows the calorie content of a meal. Do not be afraid to ask that your menu selections be prepared with less salt and no added fat.

The National Diabetes Education Program suggests a few tips to make healthy choices:

• Order first so others do not influence your choices.
• Order a small or half-portion meal or have an appetizer as a main meal.
• Order a salad to start and share a main dish.
• Choose steamed, grilled or broiled foods instead of those that are fried or sautéed.
• Order a dessert once in a while. Pick healthy desserts like fruit or frozen yogurt.
• Drink water or skim or low-fat milk instead of sweetened juices or soda.
• If you drink alcohol, choose wine or light beer. Avoid mixed drinks.

Be active! You can choose biking, camping, hiking or canoeing to raise your activity level. If you are off to the beach, you can go for a swim, take a long walk, or play a beach game. When driving for long periods, include time for a walk every few hours. If you are staying in a hotel, check out the gym, walk a few extra blocks instead of taking a taxi, swim in the hotel pool, rent bikes for the day, hike a nature trail, or spend the evening

Danita Rose, Office of Human Resources; Annie Vosel, Bureau of Family Heath Services; and Stephanie Payne, Office of EMS and Trauma respond to Flu Hotline calls from throughout the state.

Nurses have administered H1N1 injections at numerous clinics, including many held after hours.
**H1N1 Influenza Myth vs Fact**

**Myth:** The 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine has not been adequately tested so it is not safe or effective.

**Fact:** Clinical trials conducted by the National Institutes of Health and the vaccine manufacturers have shown that the new 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine is both safe and effective. It is produced in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The FDA has licensed it. There have been no safety shortcuts. Top doctors and scientists believe the risk of the flu, especially for pregnant women, children, and people with underlying health conditions, is higher than any risk that might come from the 2009 H1N1 vaccine.

**Myth:** The 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine was made too quickly.

**Fact:** It is produced exactly the same way the regular flu vaccine is produced every year. It is simply a new virus strain. In fact, had 2009 H1N1 flu struck this country earlier than this spring, the H1N1 strain probably would have been included as part of this year’s regular flu shot.

**Myth:** The 2009 H1N1 nasal spray flu vaccine is not as effective as the shot (injectable) vaccine.

**Fact:** Based on available data, both vaccines are expected to be effective against 2009 H1N1 flu.

**Myth:** Taking the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine will give you the flu.

**Fact:** The H1N1 vaccine is made with either a dead virus (shot) or weakened virus (nasal mist) and neither can result in a flu infection or flu illness.

**Myth:** If I receive the nasal spray 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine, I can pass the virus on to other people and infect them.

**Fact:** Because the virus is weakened, it is very unlikely to infect others or cause them to have flu symptoms.
If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee’s supervisor and a copy by e-mail to arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee’s name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

Faye Allen
Brenda Furlow
Health Provider Standards
from Mabry A. Cook
Alexander City, Ala.

Wade Bobo
Karen Hope
Ronnie Russell
DeKalb County Health Department
from Jim Hollins
Pelham, Ala.

Reba Brannon
Shelby County Health Department
John Ellison
Sandra Gallops
Health Marketing Division
from Gayle Whatley
Birmingham, Ala.

Pamela Carpenter
Ellen James
Mike Jarrett
Health Provider Standards
from Brian L. McFeely
Mobile, Ala.

Tony B. Dunklin
Facilities Management
from Kelvin Callahan
Hartselle, Ala.

Tony Dunklin
Rachel Durden
Candy Esterling
Jim Free
Facilities Management
from Jay Morehouse
Montgomery, Ala.

Rick Harris
Health Provider Standards
Ruthie Spencer
Health Provider Standards
Patricia Ivie
General Counsel
from Glenn S. Sisk
Sylacauga, Ala.

Theresa Mulkey
Center for Health Statistics
from Brenda Sue Parrott
(Rhodes) Landry
Strafford, Mo.
from Sherry and Eugene Loving
Kennard, Texas

LaShawn Pierce
Financial Services
Janis Pritchett
Financial Services
Carla Shaw
Financial Services
Jamekia Walker
Home and Community Services
from Sherry Bradley
Environmental Services

Melanie Rightmyer
Health Promotion and Chronic Disease
from Tammie Capps
Tennessee

Colleen Turner, a Prattville native, celebrated her 35th year of service with the Autauga County Health Department Oct. 23. She started her career with Public Health in the Autauga County Health Department Clinic in October 1974.
Olympic swimming champion Crissy Ahmann toured several locations in Alabama to help promote physical activity, including making presentations at a school in Greenville, the YMCA Sea Lions swim team in Prattville, the Rotary Club in Madison, the RSA Tower, and appearances in Tallassee, Birmingham and Millbrook.

Ms. Ahmann competed at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, where she was team captain and received a gold medal in 4x100 m medley relay, a gold medal in 4x100 m freestyle relay, and a silver medal in 100 m butterfly. She continues to be active in promoting healthy lifestyle issues. She works with the Foundation for Global Sports Development to support programs that promote sportsmanship, education, fair play, and ethics among the world’s youth. While in the state, she shared with students the culture of sport, competing clean, and on a level playing field.

Global Sports Development combines sports and education to teach youth:
- What sportsmanship means by definition and application
- To develop a sense of fair play and ethics
- To improve academic performance
- To maintain drug-free sport
- To problem-solve and build self-esteem
- To work with peers
- To strive for excellence
- To manage anger and stress

Alabama Department of Public Health Nutrition and Physical Activity Division director, Miriam Gaines, stated, “We are pleased to be able to partner with Crissy in encouraging our youth and adults to be physically active because of the numerous health benefits it produces.”

Regular physical activity is important for health. It can help in weight control, help in heart health and diabetes control, reduce risks for some cancers, helps reduce risk for osteoporosis and make strong bones. In addition, physical activity is important for mental health. Being physically active can reduce feelings of depression and anxiety.

Being physically active does not mean having a drudgery of exercise, says Ms. Gaines. She encourages persons of all ages to find an activity they enjoy and then, do it. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that young people (ages 6–17) participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily. It is recommended that adults get 2 hours, 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (such as brisk walking) every week in addition to strength building.

These presentations were a partnership between the Foundation for Global Sports Development (www.globalsportsdevelopment.org/) and the ADPH Nutrition and Physical Activity Division (adph.org/NUTRITION).

Breastfeeding Benefits

- Breastfeeding results in less sick days for parents.
- Breastmilk provides the ideal balance of nutrients.
- Breastfeeding helps protect baby against respiratory infections.

Dr. Artie Menefee, Auburn University Economic and Community Development Institute and member of the ACE Board of Directors (left) and Glen Haab, Alabama Southern Community Development Coordinator and Vice Chair of the Associates Council (right) present the Alabama Communities of Excellence Volunteer Award to Carolyn Bern. She is outreach coordinator of the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health.
Town Hall Meetings Seek to Reduce Health Disparities in Minorities

The Alabama Department of Public Health Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Advisory Council is holding a series of Minority Health Disparities Town Hall satellite conferences and webcast programs. The initial program was designed for persons involved in the delivery of health care services for minorities burdened by chronic disease.

Disparities in the leading health indicators exist in both access to care and care received by Alabama’s citizens, but especially the minority populations. These disparities can result in shorter life expectancy, decreased quality of life, loss of economic opportunities, and social inequality.

The program titled Health Disparities in Minorities Town Hall Meeting was a result of a collaboration between the Office of Minority Health and the ADPH Health Disparities Advisory Council. It tied together six leading health indicators with predominant disparities in Alabama and their associated risk factors, such as obesity/overweight, nutrition and physical activity, and tobacco use. The purpose of the series is to discuss the importance of reducing and eliminating health disparities in Alabama.

The program included a round table discussion with the department’s management from public health’s chronic disease programs such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and tobacco prevention.

Health care providers play key roles in identifying and treating patients who suffer from chronic diseases. Providers are encouraged to participate to increase their understanding of the importance of reducing and eliminating health disparities as they relate to the six leading health indicators.

A town hall meeting on Nov. 18 dealt with diabetes and tobacco use and a Dec. 16 meeting focused on HIV/AIDS and STDs in Minority Populations. To register and for details about the free satellite and webcast conferences, go to the Alabama Public Health Training Network at www.adph.org/alphtn/ and click on “Satellite Conference and Webcast Schedule” to see program information. Programs are also available as audio conferences for those people who do not have access to a satellite downlink or Internet connection.

For more information on health disparities in Alabama, go to the State of Alabama Office of Minority Health Web site at www.adph.org/minorityhealth/, or for additional information on the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities, visit the Federal Office of Minority Health at http://www.omhrc.gov/.
Registered nurse Brooke Little of the Etowah County Health Department performed a heroic act that likely saved a patient’s life in a trailer fire. When she made a recent home visit, Ms. Little discovered a strong smell of smoke in the mobile home. Upon investigation and assessment, she found the rear of the patient’s trailer was totally engulfed in flames.

Knowing that the patient had multiple oxygen canisters throughout his home, Ms. Little quickly performed a safety scan and immediately evacuated the patient to safety. While contacting EMS, Brooke saw that the patient had returned inside the burning home to retrieve a set of car keys.

With patient safety foremost on her mind, Ms. Little returned inside the trailer to take the patient back outside. Once they were outside and safe, Ms. Little began to perform a head-to-toe assessment on the patient and noted he was very short of breath. At that time emergency medical services arrived, she provided an extensive report, the patient was placed on portable oxygen, and the man had a full recovery.

To this day, the patient refers to Ms. Little as his true “Angel of Mercy.” If not for her heroism and care, he might not have survived.

Area 5 Home Care Services Nurse Manager Pam Talbot said, “Brooke is a very caring nurse; she has always strived to make a positive impact in the clients she cares for. Brooke is truly humble about the whole incident. When she relayed the story, it was not to tell about saving the patient, but more about what a ‘different day’ she had experienced, one patient’s home in flames, and then she had a wreck en route to another patient’s home. Her supervisor and I said, ‘Wait, go back to what you said right before the wreck.’”

Area Administrator Mary Gomillion said, “I think what she did is fantastic. She represents the true hero who was very understated in the way she handled it. We are incredibly proud of what she does every day. She is the type of nurse I would like caring for a member of my own family.”

The Alabama Chapter-AAP, in conjunction with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, was one of eight state chapters awarded a $15,000 grant for the Mobilizing Healthcare Professionals as Community Leaders in the Fight Against Childhood Obesity project, a program of the National Initiative for Children’s Healthcare Quality, in cooperation with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the California Medical Association Foundation, the Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Ranking sixth among the states in childhood obesity and second in adult obesity, Alabama was one of 13 states targeted to receive grant funds. Partnering with ADPH, the chapter will rely on the agency’s nutrition and physical activity professionals and previous history in working with communities to address childhood obesity in a pilot community, Brewton.

The goals of the project are to provide a community assessment, a full day of training, and assistance in developing a strategic plan for nutrition and/or physical activity interventions to address childhood obesity at the local level. A state team, with representation from the state Obesity Task Force and Alabama Communities of Excellence, will help the community team determine the availability of healthy foods and beverages, the accessibility to increase physical activity; and capacity to build awareness and support for the goal of reversing the childhood obesity epidemic.

The local team will identify priorities and begin development of a community strategic plan after the training to sustain long-term changes. The long-term goal for the state team is to replicate this successful process in other areas of the state.

“Our community is very excited to begin this work,” said Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP, a community pediatrician in Brewton, citing the energy that already exists among members of the Coalition for a Healthier Escambia County.

By Linda Lee
Program Overview - WHI-FI is a joint collaborative venture between Aid to Inmate Mothers and the Office of Women’s Health. This program is a gender-specific initiative developed to provide preventative health education and referral information for women offenders at Tutwiler Prison for Women, Montgomery Community Based Institution, and Birmingham Community Based Facility. The purpose of WHI-FI is to increase awareness about women’s health, foster healthy lifestyles prior to and after release, and assist with linkages to public health services in their local community.

Pre Release and Reentry Program – The three female institutions offer a Pre Release and Reentry Program to inmates who are within 30 – 90 days of release from prison. This program is offered monthly at Tutwiler Prison for Women and quarterly at Birmingham and Montgomery Community Based Institutions. The program offers a series of modules that focus on healthy lifestyles after prison. Incarcerated women participate in modules on the following topics: (1) Multiple addictions and recovery; (2) Job, career, financial, and communication skills; (3) Faith, communication, and character-building skills; (4) Health education, screenings, and referrals; (5) Family reintegration and reunification; and (6) Law enforcement and background checks.

Health Education and Information - Preventative health education classes are offered to the general population of women and soon-to-be released women who are participating in the Pre Release and Reentry Program. Preventative health classes are offered to women to encourage healthy lifestyles, improve decision-making skills, and improve health literacy. Classes are offered on the following topics: (1) HIV/AIDS and STDs; (2) Hepatitis; (3) Tuberculosis; (4) Smoking and Tobacco Use; (5) Body Piercing and Tattooing; (6) Diabetes; (7) Cardiovascular Disease; (8) Breast Cancer; (9) Cervical Cancer; (10) Nutrition and Physical Fitness; (11) Positive Mental Health; and, (12) Human Sexuality and Addiction.

Community Linkages and Referrals – After completion of the Pre Release and Reentry Program, women are provided with referral and contact information to link them to county health departments in the area in which they will live after release from prison. While participating in the program, women are orientated to a range of different health care programs that are available at their local county health department. Some of these programs include: (1) HIV/STD screenings; (2) Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program; (3) Immunizations; (4) Birth control contraceptives; (5) Health education and informational materials; (6) WIC services; (7) Birth certificates and vital records; (8) Health and dental screenings; and (9) Health care referrals to specialty clinics. Inmates are also provided with contact information for community rural health clinics; federally qualified health centers and mental health centers.

For more information on the WHI-FI Program, please contact Elana Parker at (334) 206-7980.

Rural Health Conference Set for March 24-25

Join the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, the Alabama Rural Health Association and the Office of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma March 24 and 25 for the Rural Health conference at the Marriott Legends at Capitol Hill.

Featuring:
• Latest federal and state updates on Health Information Technology and things you can do now
• Tips from national experts on major rural health challenges and solutions
• Rural Health Clinics - what are the benefits of becoming a RHC, how do you establish a RHC
• Assist providers considering converting to an RHC
• Updates on EMS CPAC rescue pod
• News on Health Care Reform and how it will impact rural providers

Pictured at a WHI-FI Health Education Forum are (left to right) Jessica Hardy, Melanie Rightmyer, Julia Sosa, Sharon Thompson, Teresa Fair, Elana Parker, and Mallory Johnson.
The love of running led Lauren Lerner, public health environmentalist with the Montgomery County Health Department, to win in her age group, women 20-24, in Montgomery’s first Half Marathon Oct. 3. A chip in the high tech racing bib she wore proved her winning time at 1 hour, 35 minutes, 34.02 seconds. Approximately 650 runners registered for the competition.

When she’s not inspecting restaurants, hotels, jails, prisons, pools or camps, she enjoys spending her time running. She began running on a regular basis at age 13 mainly because of the encouragement of her father, an avid runner himself. She had only run in one marathon previously, and it was in Chicago where the course was much flatter.

Although Ms. Lerner came in first place, she was somewhat disappointed in her time. She said she was shooting for a 90 minute time, which would be a 7 minute per mile pace. “I underestimated some of the hills,” she remarked. “This was definitely more of a challenging course than I thought it would be. I do interval training on hills.”

Ms. Lerner began the race in the middle of the pack and worked hard to pace herself with all of the people flying past her in the beginning. “Energy management” was also a concern, but she handled it well throughout the approximately 13.1 mile race.

She trains in different locations, but is especially careful in choosing where to run because she had been hit by a car when she was running when she was a student in Auburn. Fortunately, she only suffered a broken ankle and was again able to pursue her avocation.

“This is a great way to get exercise,” Ms. Lerner said. “I hope they continue the Half Marathon.” Ms. Lerner has worked with the Montgomery County Health Department since March 2008.
Team Academy July
Brian Baker, Kristina Bennett, Edith Billingslea, Viki Brant, Terry Brown, Freddie Brown, Cason Coan, Marguerite Coen, Gene Commander, Sherwanna Dunnican, Clay Elmore, Camilla English, Teresa Fair, Felicia Flannigan, Shirley Gant, Sheryl Gibbrey, Casey Grant, Coretta Grant, Sandra Harris, Vickie Haynes, Dechelle Merritt, Ronnie Moore, Veronica Moore-Whitfield, William Myrick, Elana Parker, Margaret Parnell, Marla Pounds, Carol Pruitt, Brenda Robbins, Jason Roley, Becky Sherrell, Takenya Taylor, Melissa Tucker, Ramona Warren, Diane West, Shakina Wheeler, Pamela Williams, Steven Wilson, Keith Wright

Team Academy August

Team Academy September
The health department gave special recognition to three Alabama hospitals which exceeded goals for submitting their satisfactory newborn screening blood specimens for calendar year 2008: Providence Hospital, Mobile County, 97.1 percent; Thomas Hospital, Baldwin County, 96.2 percent; and Walker Baptist Medical Center, Walker County, 95.5 percent.

Newborn screening is a series of blood and hearing tests that are administered within the first few days of an infant’s life and are required by state law. These tests search for signs of unseen inherited or acquired disorders that potentially could have disastrous results if left undetected or untreated. Alabama screens for 28 primary disorders in the more than 60,000 initial newborn screening tests conducted each year.

Supporting the Alabama Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation at the Jingle Bell Run for arthritis were the Public Health Prancers, principally from the Bureau of Environmental Services in Montgomery. Shown, left to right, are Jason Gardner, Steven McDaniel, Mark Sestak, Sherry Bradley, Robyn Sestak and Casey.
The Bureau of Clinical Laboratories hosted a chili cookoff on Oct. 21 to benefit the State Combined Campaign. Ashley Hubbard, pictured center, front, was chosen with making the Best Overall Chili.

Other winners in various categories were as follows: Second row: Charlynda Pierce, Most Personality; Twila Pig, Beaniest Chili; Ann White, Mildest Chili. Third row: Jeannine Parker, All American; Dr. Sharon Massingale, Chunkiest Chili; Pete Preston, Wildest Chili; Marc Buda, Best Bambi Chili. Back Row: Craig Wilson, Hottest Chili; David Sherrod, Least Caloric Chili; Jamie Hodges, Best Presentation. Not pictured is Virginia Pruitt with the Most Patriotic.

A retirement reception in honor of Kirksey Whatley, director of the Office of Radiation Control, was held Nov. 23 to recognize his 45 years of service to the state of Alabama. In his capacity as director, he has been responsible for radiation health and safety programs in the state since 1992.

Numerous guests came from out of state and from throughout Alabama to wish him well. Presentations of resolutions and certificates abounded, including those made by Dr. Charles Woernle on behalf of the department, David Walter for the Organization of Agreement States, Mike Gilley, CRCPD Chair-elect for the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Kathryn Haynes for the Southeastern Compact Commission, Bill Passetti for the State of Florida, Cecil Knight for the Alabama Chapter of the Health Physics Society, and James McNees for Gov. Bob Riley.

The State of Florida presented Whatley the Good Neighbor Award. Whatley was a strong advocate that our nation needed a consistent national policy on radiation issues. Others noted that his career was about making things better for the citizens. A resolution from the Organization of Agreement States noted he always looked at issues in terms of how they might impact the citizens. He would speak up for what he believed was in the best interest of our citizens.

Others attending the reception including his wife, children and grandchildren; current and former employees and many friends. His retirement gift was a new computer for his home and a genealogy program.
Calendar of Events

January 7
ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

January 20
Patient Information Leaflets: Discussion of Zithromax, Rocephin, Doxycycline, Erthroycin, Flagyl and Bicillin L-A-8-9 a.m.
For more information contact Thresa Dix, (334) 206-3377.

January 20
HPV and Cervical Cancer, 2-3 p.m.
For more information contact Elana Parker, (334) 206-7980.

February 3
Pediatric Network Panel, 12-1:30 p.m.
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

February 4
Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Among Latino Immigrants: How Can Health Care Providers Maximize Their Efforts? 1-2:30 p.m.
For more information contact Julia Sosa, (334) 206-3812.

February 10
Home Health Nurses, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.

February 17
Go Red to Prevent Heart Disease in Women, 2-3 p.m.
For more information contact Elana Parker, (334) 206-7980.

April 8-9
54th Annual Educational Conference, Alabama Public Health Association, Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel and Conference Center at Grand National.
For more information visit www.alphassoc.org.