



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Prepare for health emergencies during National Public Health Week 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health joins many partner organizations in encouraging Alabamians to prepare effectively for public health threats, from bioterrorism and natural disasters to disease outbreaks, during National Public Health Week, April 2-8, 2007.

Despite numerous awareness campaigns, many Americans remain largely unprepared for public health emergencies in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina. A September 2006 poll conducted by Marist College Institute for Public Opinion noted that only 31 percent of Americans have any emergency plans in place.

As part of the weeklong observance, themed "Preparedness and Public Health Threats: Addressing the Unique Needs of the Nation's Vulnerable Populations," communities across the state will explore ways to connect vulnerable populations with resources to help them prepare for health emergencies.

Focus audiences include the following populations:

- mothers with children in the household
- schools serving children in kindergarten through 12th grade
- people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes and asthma

Activities are as follows:

- On April 2, partners including the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama Partnership for Children, Alabama Chapter--American Academy of Pediatrics, Department of Human Resources, KPI Latino and many work units within the health department will focus on preparedness activities for mothers with children at home.
- Pediatric offices, childcare centers, and offices of the Departments of Human Resources and Public Health will display posters, distribute educational materials and hold workshops. Preparedness materials will be included in parenting kits distributed by hospitals to new families at birth through the Alabama Partnership for Children. Pediatricians will appear on television talk shows and pediatric offices will distribute copies of booklets titled "Are You Ready?" and "How You Can Prepare for a Flu Pandemic" for their patients. Faith-based organizations will be sent fliers for inclusion in church bulletins.

- The State Department of Education will conduct a satellite conference/webcast on pandemic influenza April 2. The State Board of Education has passed a resolution in support of National Public Health Week. An article will also be included in the April issue of Alabama Education News.

- Alabama Department of Public Health chronic disease programs are presenting diabetes pamphlets to health centers in Alabama communities. The Diabetes Branch and the Cooperative Extension System will sponsor the Sixth Annual Alabama Diabetes and Obesity Conference April 4-5 at the Taylor Center of Auburn University Montgomery.

- The department's Comprehensive Cancer Program is encouraging persons with cancer or who have had cancer to order a copy of the Lance Armstrong "LiveStrong" notebook to record their course of care. This convenient notebook includes a place for survivors to keep track of their medications and treatments received. In case they have to leave their home in an emergency, they can transport a record of their entire cancer history. To request a copy, contact Kathryn Chapman, Dr.P.A., at (334) 206-7066.

During the twelfth annual event, the American Public Health Association will reach out to policy-makers, public health officials and partner groups across the country to empower them to share tools and resources that will enable residents to overcome barriers to create preparedness plans.

Gov. Bob Riley has officially proclaimed National Public Health Week in Alabama. Other public education efforts will include television talk show appearances, the distribution of public service announcements, web site postings, and encouragement of faith-based organizations to emphasize preparedness through church bulletins. A statewide emergency preparedness billboard campaign will be extended during the first week of April.

More information on National Public Health Week 2007 may be found at www.nphw.org. Additional information on public health in Alabama is available at [www//adph.org](http://www/adph.org).

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Local activities planned for National Public Health Week include the following:

BLOUNT COUNTY

The Blount County Health Department will have booths in clinic lobby with information on all services. A coloring contest for children will be held with the winner being chosen at the end of the week (small surprise for winner with local paper involved).

CALHOUN COUNTY

On April 3, the Public Health Area 6 Emergency Preparedness Team will sponsor an exhibit on Homeland Security Preparedness Awareness Day. This exhibit will feature a continuous loop video, and staff will share informational and educational items.

DALLAS

The Dallas County Health Department will host a health fair April 3 from 9 a.m. until 12 noon.

DEKALB COUNTY

The DeKalb County Health Department will collect canned goods for donation to a mission food bank.

ETOWAH COUNTY

On April 2 the Area 5 Emergency Preparedness nurses and others plan to present emergency preparedness topics related to school age youth to approximately 125 students in the Health Allied Classes at Gadsden City High School. The mayor of Gadsden will proclaim the week, the Etowah County Health Department will have a booth with brochures and other information regarding public health services, and free immunizations will be administered April 2-4.

HALE COUNTY

The Hale County Health Department will host a health fair on April 5 in Greensboro from 1 to 4 p.m. Screening for cholesterol, blood sugar, hemoglobin, blood pressure, bone density and HIV will be offered. Emergency preparedness and pandemic influenza materials will be available.

HOUSTON COUNTY

A breakfast honoring city and county officials, State Sen. Harri Anne Smith, State Representatives Locy Baker, Benjamin Lewis and Warren Beck will be held at the Houston County Health Department on April 5 at 7:30 a.m. An overview of public health services and an update on public health emergency preparedness and disaster response will be presented at the breakfast.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Lunch and Learn sessions will be presented at the seven health centers Monday – Wednesday (April 2-4) of Public Health Week. The theme for each day is one strategic issue from “Our Community Roadmap to Health.” Speakers for these sessions are JCDH employees. Employees, and the general public are invited to attend.

Monday, April 2

Theme: Healthy Lifestyles

- Prevent or manage chronic medical conditions
- Decrease the number of children diagnosed as overweight or obese
- Decrease abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- Develop targeted, unified messages for people to make healthy choices
- Engage the community to identify and solve health problems
- Decrease the cultural, language, social and economic barriers that negatively impact community cohesiveness

Tuesday, April 3

Theme: Smart Growth for Community Health

- Improve safety throughout communities
- Improve environmental quality
- Increase ways to be physically active in living environments
- Preserve and revitalize each neighborhood

- Work toward a county development plan with participation from all cities
- Support development of a viable and integrated mass transportation system

Wednesday, April 4

Theme: Access to Care

- Link all children to appropriate health insurance coverage
- Increase mental health resources throughout the community
- Increase the availability & access to services for targeted populations
- Develop workforce competencies

Thursday, April 5 (8 a.m.)

Employee Recognition Ceremony

Birmingham Sheraton Civic Center

Employees are recognized by their peers for the outstanding work that they do. They are nominated for the following awards: leadership, customer service, and creativity. One employee is chosen as “Employee of the Year” from the top 10 “Extra Mile” winners of 2006. Employees are also recognized for their dedicated years of service by receiving pins for their respective years of service to the Department.

Thursday, April 5 (1 p.m.)

Birmingham Sheraton Civic Center

Commemoration of the Department’s 90th Anniversary

The unveiling of “A New Day in Public Health”

There will be a grand reception and ceremony to celebrate two significant milestones: the accomplishments of work in public health since 1917 and the steps that are being taken in a roadmap to health that responds to the concerns and needs of the citizens of Jefferson County.

Dr. Don Williamson, State Health Officer, and Dr. Michael Fleenor, Jefferson County Health Officer, will give state and county health addresses. Congressman Artur Davis will be the keynote speaker. Also, during ceremony, external agencies/individuals that have partnered with JCDH and made a positive impact on public health will be honored. A proclamation and resolution will be declared by the County Commission and Mayor’s Office in honor of Public Health Week. The department will unveil its new Web site and logo during the ceremony. More than 800 partnering agencies, community leaders, and organizations have been invited to this event.

Friday, April 6

Unveiling of the Department’s flag with new logo

Guy M. Tate Building

Another special focus of the Jefferson County Department of Health’s celebration will feature heavy media coverage and the delivery of translated materials to designated sites such as stores, churches and community organizations. A Spanish language station, Radio Centro Birmingham 1320 AM, will air a public service announcement. The Magic Balloon Kids Show, also sponsored by the ALL Kids Program, will have a special segment covering the information from the preparedness manual that weekend.

MOBILE COUNTY

The Mobile County Health Department provides services at nine locations throughout Mobile County. "Take the First Step" information covering all topics will be on hand every day at each clinic.

Prior to the start of National Public Health Week, information about its theme and topics will be sent to all departmental employees.

On Tuesday, Mobile Mayor Sam Jones will present a proclamation to Dr. Bert Eichold, MCHD Public Health Officer, proclaiming April 2-8 to be Public Health Week in Mobile. A news release will be sent to the local news media advising them of this photo opportunity.

A "Take the First Step" banner will be posted at the main entrance to MCHD's main clinic.

"Take the First Step" posters will be available in English and Spanish at all locations.

ADPH "Are You Ready" emergency preparedness booklets, "Preparing for Medical Needs in a Disaster" brochures, and "Prepare for a Flu Pandemic" booklets will be available at all locations.

Many churches will be asked to display posters, and ministers will be asked to mention National Public Health Week and "Take the First Step" to their congregations.

All materials created by MCHD will refer to its Web site as a source for valuable emergency preparedness planning information.

A new release will be sent to the local news media describing MCHD's participation in National Public Health Week.

PERRY COUNTY

Free services will be offered to the Perry County citizens from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Some services will include blood pressure checks, bone density checks, blood sugar checks, HIV testing, hemoglobin checks, cholesterol checks, AIDS awareness and many other services.

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

The St. Clair County Commission will proclaim Public Health Week. A diaper drive will be held for public health department clients in need. Children's artwork will be displayed throughout office that week.

SHELBY

Booths in the lobby will describe all services and offer copies of the WIC food pyramid.

SUMTER

The Sumter County Health Department will host a health fair April 2 from 1 to 4 p.m. at the health department at 1121 N. Washington St. in Livingston. Screenings for cholesterol, blood sugar, hemoglobin, blood pressure, bone density and HIV will be available. Emergency preparedness and pandemic influenza materials will be available.

PUBLIC HEALTH AREA 1

- In Northwest Alabama, Area 1 Health Officer Dr. Karen Landers will hold an area-wide staff meeting on April 6, which will include a presentation on pandemic influenza. Employees are making efforts to place "Are You Ready?" and "How You Can Prepare for a Flu Pandemic" booklets in pediatrician offices and schools.

PUBLIC HEALTH AREA 3

- In West Alabama, Public Health Area 3 is planning activities including appreciation events for county and city elected officials, pandemic influenza planning events and participation in an agricultural tabletop exercise.