

# ALABAMA'S HEALTH

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ALABAMA DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## TEAM WORKS DILIGENTLY AFTER FIRE DESTROYS BUTLER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT BUILDING

Restoring full services and operations to the residents of Butler County as soon as possible is the primary goal of the department following a devastating fire resulting in a total loss of the building and contents at the Butler County Health Department in Greenville. No one was in the building at the time of the fire that occurred in the early morning hours of Sunday, June 30. The blaze has been ruled an accident and the cause was likely an electrical fire.

Corey Kirkland, Southeastern Public Health District Administrator, thanked the first responders who extinguished the fire and, thankfully, no one suffered any injuries. Soon after the fire was reported, there was an outpouring of offers of help from local and state leadership and other public health departments around the state as the team immediately began making plans to address multiple short-term and long-term needs.

Temporary work locations for employees had to be found. Information technology considerations for temporary sites, security of the burned building location and medications housed in the facility were among the numerous major projects being undertaken. As possible health department locations are explored, the many necessary replacements include software, computers and printers;

*continued on page 3*



# TIMOTHY HATCH, MPA, REHS, HONORED WITH WALTER F. SNYDER ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AWARD

*Hatch recognized by NSF and NEHA for legacy of disaster response across the American South, and representing environmental and public health to the United States Congress, the United Nations and the World Health Organization*

ANN ARBOR, Mich., July 19, 2024--NSF, a global public health and safety organization, and the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) today announced Timothy Hatch, MPA, REHS, as the 2024 recipient of the Walter F. Snyder Environmental Health Award. The award recognizes Hatch for his outstanding contributions to the advancement of environmental and public health.

Hatch serves as the District Health Administrator for the State of Alabama Department of Public Health, where he leads a team of 300 that solves public and environmental health challenges impacting 709,000 people across 7,300 square miles. In addition to guiding policy and securing funding for a healthier Alabama, Hatch's legacy includes conducting international environmental health training in emergency response with the International Federation of Environmental Health, contributing to the United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction's Food Safety and Public Health Scorecard, and representing the United States at the 2017 United Nations Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction.

In collaboration with the World Health Organization, he was the sole environmental health expert on a group tasked with creating a Public Health Scorecard for resilient cities. In 2022, Hatch spent hours engaging with the United States Congress to ensure environmental health was funded as part of the Pandemic and Hazards Preparedness Act – a monumental benefit to public health nationwide.

The award was presented to Hatch by Pedro Sancha, President and CEO of NSF at a ceremony on July 17 at the 2024 NEHA Annual Education Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

"It is an honor to be recognized by two such prestigious organizations," said Hatch. "Citizens across the globe are

united in the hope of a safer, healthier world; I am grateful to have a hand in shaping the environmental health workforce and frameworks that sustain that world."

Founded in 1971, the Snyder Award honors Walter F. Snyder, co-founder and first executive director of NSF, and individuals who, like him, pioneer environmental and public health through their careers.

"Tim Hatch's work has true impact," said Pedro Sancha, President and CEO of NSF. "From procuring funding for rural homeowners for onsite septic systems and serving as the incident manager for Alabama's statewide response to the COVID-19 pandemic to training over 2,000 environmental health specialists for the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Environmental Health and Emergency Response, he has improved the health and well-being of millions of people around the world."



**Shown, from left, are Pedro Sancha, President and CEO, NSF; Timothy Hatch, Administrator, East Central District; and Dr. David Dyjack, CEO, NEHA (Photo: Business Wire)**

## Alabama Department of Public Health

### Mission

To promote, protect, and improve Alabama's health.

### Vision

Healthy People. Healthy Communities. Healthy Alabama.

### Core Values

Excellence, Integrity, Innovation, and Community.

## Alabama's Health

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**Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H.**  
State Health Officer

**Jamey Durham, M.B.A.**  
Director, Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support

**Arrol Sheehan, M.A.**  
Editor

**Noelle Ahmann**  
Graphic Designer



certificates for professional licenses destroyed in the fire; equipment such as locking file cabinets and examination beds; and furnishings for waiting areas and offices.

As the disaster recovery proceeds, human resource concerns center around the need for public health employee assessment to deal with the psychological impact of the fire and the need to offer confidential personal assistance.

The Jefferson County Department of Health has deployed a mobile unit to be used by the department. Jefferson County staff gave instructions on the use of the unit.



Kirkland added, "Kyle (Odom) and I sincerely thank Dr. David Hicks, the Jefferson County Health Department, Butler County Health Department staff, District staff, Central Office, and Robins and Morton staff for their assistance over the last four weeks. Without their incredible assistance, we wouldn't have two locations prepared for employees and patients so quickly after the fire."

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE LEADERS ATTEND JOINT TB CONFERENCE

Claire Payne, TB Division Director, at right, and Dr. Burnestine Taylor, Medical Officer, Disease Control and Prevention, attended the 2024 TB Conference in Baltimore, Md., in April. This was a joint conference with the Union-NAR (North American Region) and the National TB Coalition of America. Participants discussed TB issues in the U.S. and Canada and explored programmatic issues and potential solutions. They joined TB colleagues in attending a Baltimore Orioles baseball game at Camden Yards.



# EQUITABLE NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE HAILS SUCCESS AND LASTING IMPACT AT MILESTONE CELEBRATION

Residents of small, rural, and low-income Alabama communities seldom have the opportunities and advantages offered to other Alabamians living in larger, wealthier locales for projects to benefit the public. The COVID-19 pandemic brought many of the health and quality of life challenges of people living in these areas to light, as many communities lacked access to care and had far worse health outcomes as a result.

The Equitable Neighborhoods Initiative, ENI, connects neighborhoods to resources to improve health equity and development of each of 20 Alabama communities. The project leader is Dr. Arturo Menefee, interim director of the University of Alabama Center for Research and Economic Development, UA Center for Economic Development.

Dr. Menefee welcomed more than 100 attendees including local liaisons and partners to a milestone celebration for ENI held June 10 at the University of Alabama. He explained that ENI works with local residents in marginalized communities to help them establish a human infrastructure that allows them to address neighborhood issues. The goal of this community-focused, community-driven initiative is to make the communities stronger, more resilient, and better prepared for the future.

The evolution of the federally funded ENI initiative was explained by Carolyn Bern, director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations, who was given the responsibility of overseeing a sizable federal grant for the initiative 3 years ago. A goal was to address issues uncovered during the pandemic.

The ENI is supported by funds made available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Center for State,



***Shown from left are Pittsview Community ENI Liaison Leroy Davis, Jr., Latisha Kennebrew, Carolyn Bern and Dr. Arturo Menefee.***

Tribal, Local and Territorial Support. The department of Public Health supports ENI at the state level. Latisha Kennebrew, director of the Office of Health Equity and Minority Health, also discussed her role with ENI. She praised ENI community liaisons who are valued partners in the areas where healthcare professionals rarely work. They are trusted leaders in areas which are most impacted by health disparities.

Recognizing that a community's greatest strength is its people, ENI works with all ages from youths to retirees and molds its activities through local advisory groups and youth community councils unique to their culture and neighborhoods. ENI aims to help as many people as possible, including young people and those with functional and access needs. ENI has helped identify and highlight resources. For example, by becoming acquainted with people across the state, some small communities have been able to obtain rental assistance grants and a homeowners' assistance program.

ENI partner communities are Bayou La Batre, Blountsville, Camp Hill, Coden, Collinsville, Crossville, Dadeville, Fayette, Goodwater, Guin, Haleyville, Hobson City, Kilpatrick, LaFayette, Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe, Midway, MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians, Pittsview, Prichard and Sulligent.

Each community determines what issues to address, makes plans, and takes action. Guin Mayor Phil Segraves discussed the town's new equipment, walking trail, and mental health first aid training provided to 35 people, including one resident who became a certified instructor.

Mayor Alberta McCrory of Hobson City spoke with pride about Alabama's oldest incorporated all black city, the hometown of former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher. Hobson City has a walking trail and other amenities, including the oldest continuously used park in an African American community. Mildred Whittington, mayor of Midway; Dr. Lebaron Byrd, Chief of the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians; and James Wright, Chief of the Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama, also spoke about the successes of ENI including the construction of an Indian village with a healing zone. Both South Alabama tribes are recognized by the state, but not by the federal government.

Chief Wright said, "We are learning about each other. Before COVID, it was hard to get young people involved in projects, but ENI is a good thing. Now kids are taking the initiative to plant shrubs and stake and water trees they helped plant in Veterans Park."

In celebrating this ENI milestone, community liaisons and their supporters concluded that their neighborhoods are healthier and better places to live as a result of the initiative.

# CDC RECOGNIZES MOBILE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S WORK DURING ALABAMA COASTAL CLEANUP

In 2021, the Mobile County Health Department established the Health Equity Office (HEO) to address health disparities in Mobile County. Funding came from the National Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among Populations at High-Risk and Underserved, Including Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and Rural Communities.

During the 35th annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup, the HEO partnered with the Alabama Coastal Foundation (ACF) to host a cleanup project in North Mobile. MCHD's Environmental Health and Community Prevention Program team members assisted in the cleanup.

Among the community partners were Mount Vernon's Willing Workers Community Action Group and the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians. Volunteers covered 50 miles of land and collected over 3,000 pounds of trash inland and along the water. Looking ahead to future coastal cleanup projects, the HEO worked with the Alabama Department of Conservation and National Resources to get the Mount Vernon and MOWA communities designated as official Coastal Cleanup locations, which entitled them to supplies and other resources to support their cleanup projects.

Those efforts have not gone unnoticed. The Alabama Department of Public Health submitted the MOWA/ Mount Vernon project to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. The national organization highlighted the event on its website at <https://www.cdc.gov/public-health-gateway/php/story/alabama-environmental-cleanup-project.html>.

"We are honored to be acknowledged for our efforts in advancing health equity and environmental justice within our community," said Dr. Kevin Michaels, Health Officer for Mobile County. "Health equity partnerships play a crucial role in improving the overall well-being of community members by addressing disparities and ensuring that everyone has access to the resources they need for a healthy life."

The CDC overview stated "Partners in Alabama came together to address social determinants of health and environmental justice issues that were contributing to community health outcomes. Through the implementation of an organized environmental cleanup day and site, residents will be able to enjoy cleaner air, waters, and recreational spaces for years to come."

*By Mark Bryant*

## MEDICAL MINUTE SPOTLIGHTS HEALTH ISSUES

Medical Minute segments are videos produced in partnership with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and the University of South Alabama (USA). Recently recorded Medical Minute segments from both campuses featured brief interviews with Dr. Scott Harris, State Health Officer; Dr. Wes Stubblefield, Medical Officer for the Northern and Northeastern Districts; Dr. Karen Landers, Chief Medical Officer; Dr. Tommy Johnson, Oral Health Office Director; Dr. Amber Clark-Brown, Medical Director of the Offices of Home and Community Services and Health Provider Standards and Medical Advisor to the Office of Health Equity and Minority Health; UAB student athletes; and several physicians from USA.

Videos included the topics of respiratory diseases, oral health, the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, Operation WIPEOUT, Safe Sleep/SIDS, vaccination, the Tobacco Quitline/secondhand smoke, and lead poisoning.



*State Health Office Dr. Scott Harris is shown at the UAB studio.*

# RETIREES

The following departmental employees have retired recently:

## APRIL

**Kenneth Edwards**  
Logistics

## MAY

**Venecia Harris**  
Children's Health Insurance Program

**William Lenz**  
Southwestern Public Health District

**Mary Wilkins**  
Northeastern Public Health District

## JUNE

**Jonita Calhoun**  
Health Provider Standards

**Linda Hines**  
Information Technology

**Ronald Holland**  
Health Care Facilities

**Christi Norton**  
Northeastern Public Health District

**Phillip Tucker**  
Family Health Services

**Deborah Williams**  
Northeastern Public Health District

## JULY

**Rhonda Jones**  
Northern Public Health District STD

**Sailaja Reddy**  
West Central Public Health District

**Kathy Ward**  
Southeastern Public Health District

**John Weiss**  
Information Technology



*Theresa Dix is shown receiving a retirement certificate from Chief Medical Officer Dr. Karen Landers. At the time of her retirement, Ms. Dix headed Infection Control and Employee Health within Clinical Management and Practice.*



*Public Health Administrative Officer Catherine Donald presents a retirement certificate to Casandra Clark of the Center for Health Statistics*



*Northeastern Public Health District Administrator Mark Johnson presents a retirement certificate to Phyllis Coughran who retired June 1 with 30 years of service. Ms. Coughran served as the Northeastern District Infectious Disease and Outbreak Nurse Supervisor.*

# FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES COMMENDED



State Committee of Public Health member Dr. Max Rogers praised the Bureau of Family Health Services for providing excellent, thorough and efficient patient care in preparation for surgical procedures he performs in Grove Hill. Shown, from left, are Amanda Martin, M.S.P.H., bureau director; Dr. Rogers; Gary Pugh, D.O., F.A.C.O.G., medical officer; and Trina Simmons, CRNP, director, Family Planning Division. Former Title X Director Jodi Blackburn, who now works in Field Operations, was instrumental in negotiating the contract with Grove Hill Hospital to perform these services.

# UAB MEDICAL STUDENTS EXPLORE PUBLIC HEALTH



Rebecca Billman, third from left, and Mariana Alvarez, second from left, rising second year students at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Heersink School of Medicine, are shown with Dr. Amber Clark-Brown and State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris after making presentations about the summer research projects they conducted as a part of the UAB Medical Student Summer Research Program (MSSRP). The students worked very closely with Dr. Clark-Brown and Dr. Ana Oliveira to bring their MSSRP projects to life. This is the second year ADPH has sponsored students from this program and exposed students to public health and policy through a research lens.

## DR. CLARK-BROWN TO SERVE ON ADVISORY BOARD

Dr. Amber Clark-Brown, Medical Director of the bureaus of Health Provider Standards and Home and Community Services and Medical Advisor to the Office of Health Equity and Minority Health, will serve as an Advisory Board Member for the startup organization, Light Women's Health. This Birmingham-based preventive health educational platform will assess and address health disparities among black women. She was invited to serve on this board which will address physical, mental and emotional health disparities that black females encounter and experience daily.

AUGUST 2024

# AUTAUGA COUNTY NURSES DAY



Nurses play an important role in public health and in society. Shown celebrating National Nurses Day 2024 at the Autauga County Health Department are, from left, Melody Brown, Staff Nurse; Mia Dix, Clinic Aide; Jalesa Thompson, Nurse Coordinator; and Marsha Galloway, Staff Nurse.

## KEN HARRISON ADDRESSES ASTHO

Workforce Development Director Ken Harrison of the Office of Human Resources addressed the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials conference June 28 in Lexington, Ky. His timely subject was titled "Trends and How Public Health Agencies Can Prepare for What's Ahead."



ALABAMA'S HEALTH 7

# STAFF MEMBERS SUPPORT FREEDOM CELEBRATION IN SCOTTSBORO

Jackson County Health Department staff participated in the 13th Annual Freedom Celebration at the Jackson County Courthouse July 3. The event, which draws hundreds of people, is presented by the Jackson County Drug Court to celebrate the freedom of the drug court graduates in addition to Independence Day. Shown at the Alabama Department of Public Health table are, from left, Candace Fennell, Haley Robinson and Lauren Jett. Organizers provided food, music, and various community resources to help people get back on their feet.



# EDUCATION AND RESOURCES SHARED AT LEE COUNTY FAMILY FUN DAY

East Central District Emergency Preparedness team members Stacye Carter, Aubie and Rebekah Estes attended the Lee County Family Fun Day event on April 27 where they were able to provide education and resources to the community. The event was hosted by the Lee County District Attorney's Office, East Alabama Mental Health, United Way, and the Lee County Sheriff's Office. The day helped educate, engage, and elevate local families about various resources available to them and highlight April as Child Abuse Prevention and Crime Victims Awareness Month. The Lee County Sheriff's Office also hosted a prescription drug takeback to allow anyone to safely dispose of unused medication.

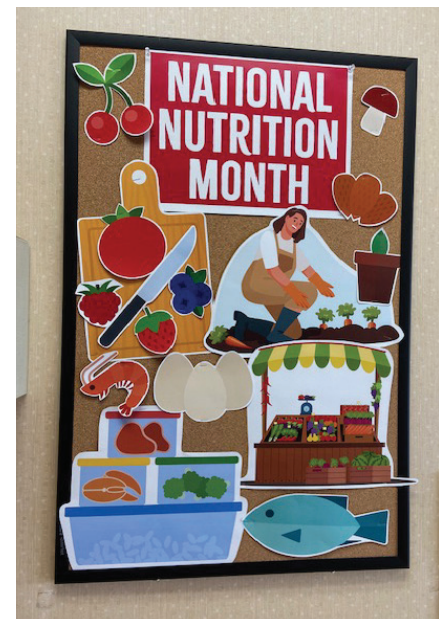


# COLORFUL DISPLAYS PROMOTE NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH 2024

The department's employees put their decorative skills to good use when they created colorful National Nutrition Month displays for their office bulletin boards. Forty-four county health departments and two Central Office programs reinforced the "Beyond the Table" theme for 2024. While most offices assembled their bulletin boards using kits, some created their own designs.

Winning bulletin boards were posted by the following county health departments:

- Choctaw County
- Coffee County
- Crenshaw County
- Dale County
- Escambia County, Atmore, WIC
- Pike County
- Southwestern District
- Winston County





# ALABAMA BEGINS SCREENING NEWBORNS FOR TWO ADDITIONAL GENETIC DISORDERS

On July 29, the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories began testing for two treatable genetic disorders. Newborn screening can alert healthcare providers to the potential for a condition that is typically not apparent at birth. With a simple blood screen and treatment, most affected babies have the opportunity to avoid death and disability and grow up healthy and develop normally.

The new disorders added to Alabama's newborn screening panel are described as follows:

Pompe disease is a rare genetic disorder caused by a deficiency of an enzyme resulting in the build-up of stored sugar, leading to severe muscle weakness. The disease can be fatal without early detection and treatment.

Mucopolysaccharidosis Type I (MPS I) is a rare genetic disorder caused by a deficiency in an enzyme resulting in the buildup of toxic materials in cells. There is wide severity and age of onset with the most severe form (Hurler syndrome) beginning within the first year of life.

Close coordination is needed for newborn screening follow-up. For these two conditions, the ADPH is partnering with the University of Alabama at Birmingham to evaluate and confirm diagnosis, and ADPH provides information to healthcare providers and families for appropriate treatment.

The Bureau of Clinical Laboratories is the sole provider of blood analysis of newborn screening in Alabama. ADPH identifies approximately 200 babies each year with a metabolic, endocrine, hematological or other congenital disorder. These babies usually look and act healthy at birth.

For additional information, please visit <https://www.hrsa.gov/advisory-committees/heritable-disorders/rusp> and <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/newbornscreening/index.html>.



*Gov. Kay Ivey signs the Zachary Thomas Newborn Screening Act*

# EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT HOLDS ITS FIRST NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION DAY



# NEWLY EMPLOYED ENVIRONMENTALISTS COMPLETE BETC IN APRIL

The Bureau of Environmental Services completed the spring session of the Basic Environmental Training Course (BETC) during April 2024. BETC is a 2-week course for newly employed environmentalists around the state. This course is offered biannually and must be successfully completed by the new environmentalists prior to their receiving permanent status with the state.

Instructors provide information on basic services the staff will be engaged in at the county health departments including onsite sewage and wastewater disposal, food establishment inspections, body art (tattoo), animal bite investigation, solid waste disposal, and more. The course also introduces the class to the ADPH legal staff and legal procedures, outbreak investigations, and sample collection as knowledge needed in their future work.



**Shown in the photo from left to right: 1st row: Abigail Barrow, Danielle Benson, Maddy Nix, Olivia Marty, Iman Obeidallah; 2nd row: Chandria McKinney, Anna Elmore, Natasha Moore, Erica Jones, Jennifer Melton, Lake Rice; 3rd row: Jennifer Jemison, Daisy Clark, Mary Elizabeth Meadows, Chris Robinson, Vera Meadows-Russell Yanerys Robles-Rowland; 4th row: Sumana Ghosh Das, Jacqueline Nunis, Amber Markley, Tracy Braswell, Holly Petersen; Top row: Michael Collins, Tim Bower, Violet Rowden, Benjamin Brown, Tarnisha Edwards, Vance Atha, Joseph Thomas**

# MAKING MEN'S HEALTH A PRIORITY: MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH CELEBRATED

The Office of Health Equity and Minority Health celebrated Men's Health Awareness Month by presenting a program, "The MANual: A Guide to Better Men's Health" June 27 in the RSA Tower. Topics covered included Knowing Your Health Status, Taking Ownership of your Health as a Man, and Men Empowerment.



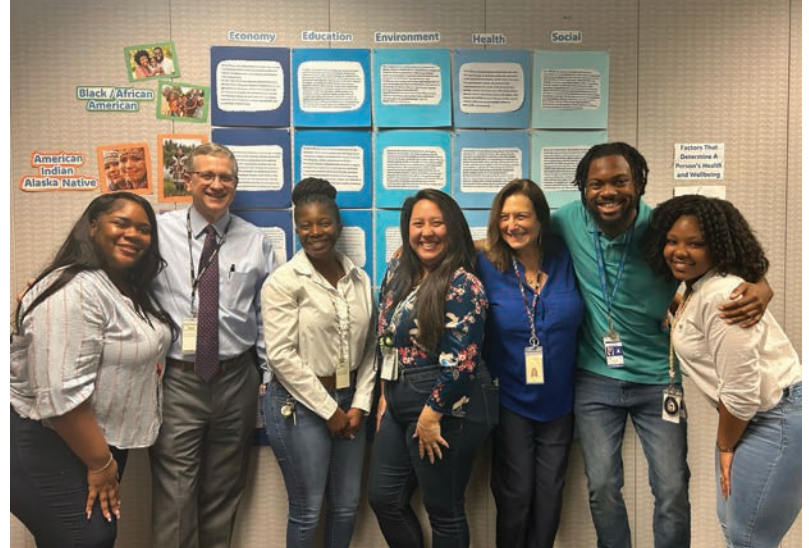
**State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris speaks about the health challenges men face.**



**Ronald Simmons, Chief Officer, Experience Montgomery and Tourism, Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce, addresses the attendees as Outreach Coordinator Matthew Clarke looks on.**

# CELEBRATING NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH WITH ADPH!

On April 26, the Office of Health Equity and Minority Health had the pleasure of hosting an event recognizing and celebrating National Minority Health Month. The event included an interactive display on STIs, treatments, and statistics on minorities and the rise of STIs in Alabama. It also had a history lesson on the origin of NMHM and the importance it held, and still holds, to minorities and achieving health equity. The main display of the event was the graph of Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) for Black/African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos/Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, and Asians. Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks. The five groups into which SDOH are divided are economic stability, education access and quality, health care access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context. The graph gave in-depth context to all five categories for all five minority groups for their SDOH for attendees to read and understand how these factors affect each minority group individually.



***A better understanding of the Social Determinants of Health was promoted at the event. Office of Health Equity and Minority Health staff are shown with State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris and Carolyn Bern, Government and Community Affairs director.***

We also had a personalized mental health bingo to accentuate the theme for NMHM, Be The Source Better Health. It gave the attendees the chance to recognize opportunities to implement healthy mental health practices into their daily lives. In addition to the mental health bingo, we also had an interactive crossword puzzle with clues for the answers throughout the display to learn more about our OHEMH Team as well as encourage engagement with the display itself.

Congratulations to Lita Chatham, Jennifer Allen, and Carlavia Edwards for having the fastest crossword puzzle completion times!

The overall goal of the event was to celebrate National Minority Health Month with our fellow ADPH bureaus and offices and shed some light on the difficulties minorities face in their everyday lives and environments. We at ADPH share the same mission of supporting the communities of Alabama, and saw it fit to provide educational context on minorities and health equity. We hope that each person was able to take something valuable away from this experience and can apply it to their daily lives, both professionally and personally.

*By Alena Simmons*

## EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY 2024



***Central Office staff were invited to make their marks on the colorful Employee Appreciation Day poster.***



***Inclement weather on May 9 meant the annual activities -- music, games, and lunch -- for Employee Appreciation Day were moved indoors in the RSA Tower.***

# DR. WES STUBBLEFIELD COMPLETES COMMUNITY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR HEALTHCARE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Public health and other healthcare professionals, emergency management, and public safety professionals gained knowledge and skills related to healthcare and public health disaster preparedness and response in a certificate program Dr. Wes Stubblefield, Medical Officer, Northern and Northwestern Districts, recently completed.

Dr. Stubblefield said, "This program is essential for any professional that wishes to increase their knowledge about community disaster preparedness."

Continuing education credits are given for completion. The four required courses provide information on healthcare preparedness and response in the following areas:

- Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) incidents,
- Medical Countermeasures and Point of Dispensing Planning and Response,
- Bombings and Bomb Threats
- Pediatric Disaster Response and Emergency Preparedness.



For information about this program, go to <https://teex.org/program/community-preparedness/>

## COMMENDATIONS

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](mailto: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.

### Bradley Baker

Information Technology  
from Tim Hatch  
East Central Public Health District

### Tim Hatch

East Central District  
from Ricky Elliott  
Montgomery, Ala.

### Georgette Blackmon

Center for Health Statistics  
from Ian Meadows  
Gulf Shores, Ala.  
Stephany Spencer  
Huntsville, Ala.

### Tommy Johnson, D.M.D.

Family Health Services  
from Dr. Zach Schultz  
Auburn, Ala.

### Talencia LeFlore

Center for Health Statistics  
from Albert C. Bulls  
Tuskegee, Ala.

### Bureau of Family Health Services

from Arrol Sheehan  
Montgomery, Ala.

### Ariel Minard

Center for Health Statistics  
from Sharon Jones  
Chicago, Ill.

### Jasmine Davis

Center for Health Statistics  
from Angela Crawford  
Spanish Fort, Ala.

### LaShunda Williams

Center for Health Statistics  
from Ian Meadows  
Gulf Shores, Ala.

## TUSCALOOSA COUNTY LACTATION BOOSTERS PROMOTE SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING

Making breastfeeding work for mothers and families is an objective of the Tuscaloosa County Health Department Lactation Boosters Peer Group. When they met in December, 10 mothers and 10 infants/children attended the meeting planned by Mary Freeman and Chariot Garrett.

Ms. Garrett spoke about prioritizing schedules, planning ahead, and making breastfeeding succeed for these moms and their families. She gave great tips about dealing with busy schedules, the stressors of the day that can interfere with taking time to nurse or pump, and activities to do with older siblings while nursing/pumping. In addition, she encouraged the moms to take good care of themselves and have a plan so the obstacles they faced did not become a barrier to providing the best for their babies. A representative from The University of Alabama's Baby Talk program also spoke to the mothers about early literacy skills which lay the groundwork for a child's education.



**AUGUST**  
National Breastfeeding Month  
National Immunization Awareness Month

**SEPTEMBER**  
Childhood Cancer Awareness Month  
Emergency Preparedness Month  
Newborn Screening Awareness Month  
Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

**SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 15**  
National Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month

# CREATIVITY AND DEDICATION DISPLAYED AT PUBLIC HEALTH EMPLOYEE ART EXHIBIT

The Georgine Clarke Alabama Artists Gallery of the Alabama State Council on the Arts presented the Alabama Department of Public Health Employee Exhibition during the month of July.

In a first-time partnership, the department's crafters, artists and makers of any skill level were invited to share their works for the public exhibition at the gallery on the first floor of the RSA Tower in Montgomery. Twenty-four employees from the Central Office and several county health departments submitted entries which included all craft and visual art media.

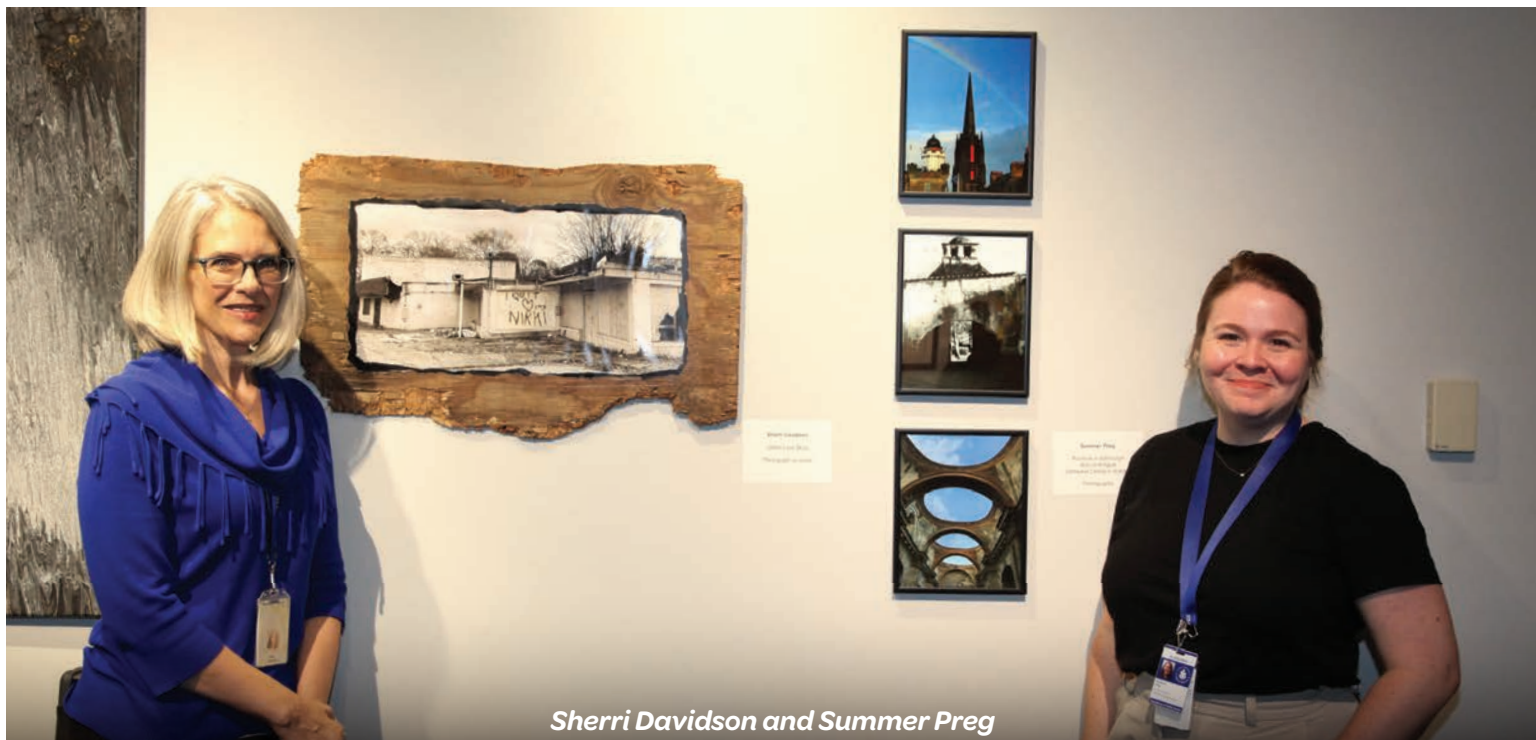
"The works are truly wonderful, and I hope you take a few moments to visit the gallery and see the amazing artistic gifts of our coworkers!" State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris stated in an email to employees encouraging them to attend an artists' reception held on July 17 in the beautiful gallery. "Thanks to all of you who have shared your artistic visions with us! I never fail to be impressed by the talents of our ADPH team members."

Employees whose creations were shown, and their work units are as follows:

Vikash Achutaramaiah, Information Technology  
Amy Anderson, Bureau of Clinical Laboratories  
Katherine Baldwin, Prevention, Promotion and Support  
Pam Billups, Health Provider Standards  
Fred Coley, Montgomery County Health Department  
Sherri Davidson, Ph.D., Informatics and Data Analytics

Michelle Epperson, Clay County Health Department  
Lynda Gilliam, M.D., Family Health Services  
Darricka Green, Family Health Services  
Tanner Guttensohn, Montgomery County Health Department  
LaTanya Hatcher, Prevention, Promotion and Support  
Keith Hicks, Houston County Health Department  
Joshua Hopper, Environmental Services  
Edana Huffman, Family Health Services  
Anna Manning, Prevention, Promotion and Support  
Zabbie Mikasobe, Health Equity and Minority Health  
April Mullins, Center for Emergency Preparedness  
April Palmer, Family Health Services  
Summer Preg, Informatics and Data Analytics  
Allaitia Rollins, HIV Prevention and Care  
Kristi Rollins, Facilities Management  
Tamara Shufford, Montgomery County Health Department  
Summer Weaver, Information Technology  
Lisa Wilhite, Health Provider Standards

Photographs of the artists with their varied creations at the reception are shown on the following pages. Thanks to Chris Hall of the Health Media and Communication Division and Joshua Hopper of the Bureau of Environmental Services for photographing the amazing works displayed.



*Sherri Davidson and Summer Preg*

*continued on page 14*



Darricka Green



Allaitia Rollins



Kristi Rollins



April Mullins



April Palmer



Anna Manning



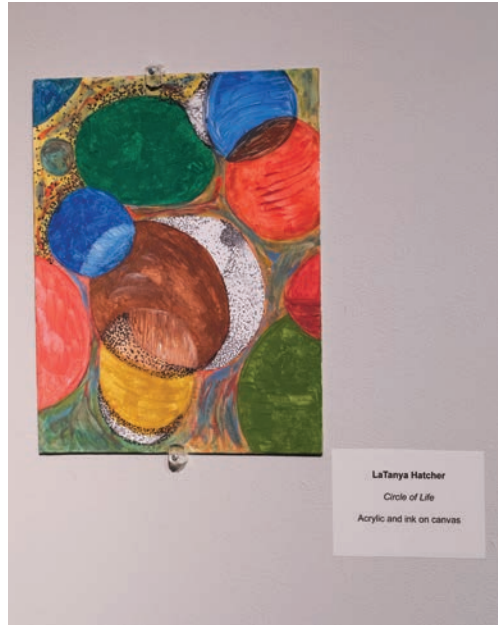
Dana Huffman



Joshua Hopper



Fred Cook  
Blue & White  
Pencil, pen and ink



LaTanya Hatcher  
Circle of Life  
Acrylic and ink on canvas



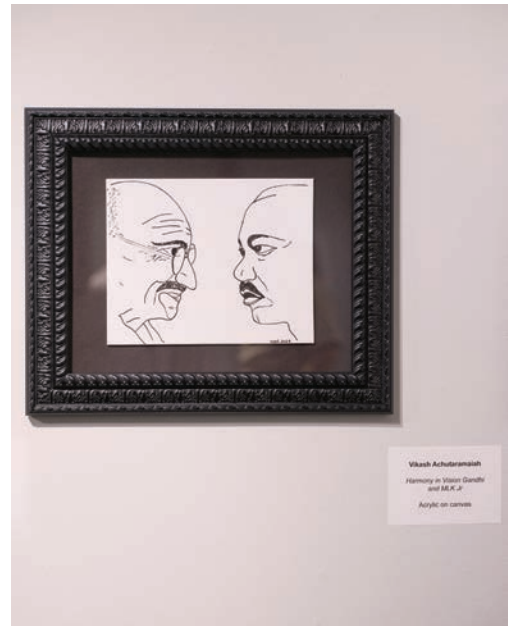
Darricka Green  
Scenes from Selma:  
Washington St. Supermarket,  
2023  
Photograph



Amy Anderson  
Green-eyed Blue  
Aluminum tabs on wood



Amy Anderson  
Shining Blue Bird  
Plastic tabs on drift wood



Vikash Achutharamiah  
Harmony in Vision: Gandhi  
and MLK, Jr.  
Acrylic on canvas



Ann White  
Native American  
Pencil and ink



Pam Billups  
Covid Hotline Assignment  
Photo collage of completed  
coloring sheets



Lisa Wilkie  
2024 The Year of the Circle  
and Ring!  
Brighten Your Day  
Photographs



# VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES (VBD) NEWSLETTER

## Summer 2024

Vector-borne diseases are infectious diseases that are transmitted to humans and other animals by insects, ticks, fleas, rodents, and other animals.

Newsletter written by Alexis Hynes, M.P.H. Epidemiologist and Jasmine Kennedy, M.P.H. Epidemiologist



## MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES

### The Inside Scoop

The most effective way to avoid getting sick from viruses spread by mosquitoes is to prevent mosquito bites. Mosquitoes can spread viruses that make you sick or, in rare cases, cause death.

Some species of mosquitoes primarily bite during the day, while others are active during the morning and evening hours. Mosquitoes live outdoors, but may enter our homes through open doors, windows, or damaged screens. You cannot tell whether or not a mosquito that bites you is carrying a virus just by looking at it, so you must protect yourself from all mosquito bites.

Examples of viruses spread by mosquitoes:

- West Nile
- Eastern equine encephalitis virus (EEEV)
- Dengue
- Chikungunya
- Zika

Everyone should be prepared to prevent mosquito bites by using insect repellent, wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants, and taking steps to control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors. These steps include dumping standing water, using screens on windows and doors, and covering trash cans and rain barrels. For more information on controlling mosquitoes, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes/mosquito-control/mosquito-control-at-home.html>.

When traveling overseas, learn about destination-specific health risks and recommendations by visiting <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>.

***“When used as directed, insect repellents are the BEST way to protect yourself and family members from getting sick from mosquito bites.”***

***– Centers for Disease Prevention and Control***

### 2023 Surveillance Data

West Nile virus (WNV) is the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease in the United States. Cases of WNV primarily occur during mosquito season, which starts in the summer and continues through the fall. There are currently no vaccines to prevent or medications to treat WNV in people.

In 2023, many West Nile Virus (WNV) cases were reported statewide. A total of 29 human cases were confirmed. WNV is underreported mostly because people do not seek care due to mild symptoms that resembles the flu. Additionally, WNV activity was reported in eight sentinel chickens, one horse, and two birds (an American Crow and Brown Pelican).

Additionally, there were three cases of EEEV in Baldwin County with one fatality. Mosquitoes that transmit WNV and EEE are found statewide.

ALABAMA  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH

**Alabama Department of Public Health  
Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks Division**

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(334) 206-5300 • FAX (334) 206-5520 • [alabamapublichealth.gov/mosquito](http://alabamapublichealth.gov/mosquito)

# PREVENTING MOSQUITO BITES WHILE TRAVELING

Travelers should learn about current risks and how to prevent mosquito bites during their trip. Mosquitoes spread viruses and parasites not common or present in the continental United States.

- Plan ahead before traveling.
- Pack insect repellent and protective clothing.
- Look for lodging with screens or air conditioning or pack a mosquito net.
- If traveling abroad, find out if vaccines for mosquito-borne diseases are available.
- After your trip, watch for symptoms and prevent mosquito bites for 3 weeks.

For more prevention tips while traveling, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes/prevention/preventing-mosquito-bites-while-traveling.html>.

It is important to investigate travel-related cases because Alabama does have the mosquitoes that can transmit those diseases. For mosquito-borne disease, investigations are higher than cases due to clinical and laboratory evidence not meeting the criteria to classify as a case.



Below in the chart are all the reported human cases in 2023 for the state of Alabama.

| Mosquito-Borne Disease Cases Reported Year-To-Date*   | Total of Cases by Year Reported 2023 | Total Investigations by Year Reported 2023 |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| California serogroup viruses (California encephalitis, Jamestown Canyon, Keystone, La Crosse, Snowshoe hare, Trivittatus viruses) | 0                                    | 0  |
| Chikungunya - (travel related, acquired out of state)   | 1                                    | 4  |
| Dengue - (travel related, acquired out of state)  | 5                                    | 13   |
| Eastern equine encephalitis   | 3                                    | 3  |
| Malaria - (travel related, acquired out of state)   | 11                                   | 11   |
| West Nile   | 29                                   | 71   |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>49</b>                            | <b>102</b>                                 |

*Some of the mosquitoes found in Alabama includes Aedes aegypti (Yellow-fever mosquito), Aedes albopictus (Asian tiger mosquito), and culex quinquefasciatus (Southern house mosquito).*

# TICK-BORNE DISEASES

## The Inside Scoop

Tick-borne diseases are transmitted to a person from the bite of an infected tick.

Some common ticks in Alabama are the Blacklegged (Deer), American Dog (Wood), and Lone Star. Ticks typically dwell in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas. While more active in the early spring and late fall months, tick-borne illnesses are reported year-round. It is vital to remain vigilant by conducting tick checks whenever you return from the outdoors.

Examples of diseases spread by ticks:

- Spotted fever rickettsiosis
- Lyme disease
- Ehrlichiosis
- Anaplasmosis
- Babesiosis
- Tularemia

### Clinical Diagnosis of Tick-borne Diseases

Many tick-borne diseases can be difficult to diagnose due to the non-specific signs and symptoms in the early stages of illness. Signs and symptoms can vary from patient to patient and can resemble other, more common diseases. Some signs and symptoms may include:



Fever



Chills



Muscle and joint pains



Malaise



Rash

(erythema migrans for Lyme disease cases)



Headache

Below in the chart are all the reported human cases in 2023 for the state of Alabama.

| Tick-Borne Disease Cases Reported Year-To-Date* | Total of Cases by Year Reported 2023 | Total Investigations by Year Reported 2023 |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Anaplasmosis                                    | 1                                    | 7  |
| Babesiosis                                      | 1                                    | 6  |
| Ehrlichiosis                                    | 4                                    | 9  |
| Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis, undetermined         | 0                                    | 1  |
| Lyme disease                                    | 36                                   | 171  |
| Spotted Fever Rickettsiosis                     | 81                                   | 380  |
| Tularemia                                       | 1                                    | 5  |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>124</b>                           | <b>579</b>                                 |

*For tick-borne disease, investigations are higher than cases due to clinical and laboratory evidence not meeting the criteria to classify as a case.*

# PREVENTING TICK BITES WHILE OUTDOORS

*Reducing exposure to ticks is the best defense against tickborne diseases. Tick exposure can occur year-round, but ticks are most active during warmer months (April-September).*

- Know where to expect ticks
- Treat clothing and gear
- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents
- Avoid contact with ticks

For more prevention tips, visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/prevention/index.html>

If bitten by a tick, keep the tick and contact your healthcare provider. The tick can also be sent to the University of South Alabama for tick identification. For more information, visit

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/tick/index.html>



**Check your clothing and body for ticks after being outdoors in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas where ticks live!**

**Check these parts of your body and your child's body for ticks:**

**IN AND AROUND** THE HAIR

**IN AND AROUND** THE EARS

**UNDER** THE ARMS

**INSIDE** BELLY BUTTON

**AROUND** THE WAIST

**BETWEEN** THE LEGS

**BACK OF** THE KNEES

