

Alabama's health

A publication of the Alabama Department of Public Health

Public Health Responds to Massive Gulf Oil Spill

The explosion April 20 on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig which led to the massive oil spill into the Gulf of Mexico has presented new and challenging concerns for public health.

From the outset and in the first days and weeks of the oil spill disaster, Public Health Area 11 (Mobile County Health Department) emergency preparedness (EP) personnel established a public health presence in the Unified Command Center (UCC) at Coast Guard Sector Mobile. It soon became apparent that larger quarters would be necessary to accommodate the growing numbers of responding personnel, and PHA 11 EP personnel assisted in relocating the UCC to the Mobile Convention Center. The UCC was later moved to a more secure, suburban site in west Mobile. PHA 11 EP personnel also participated in all Oil Spill Situational Meetings at the Alabama State Agency Coordinating Center/Forward Operating Center and offered input to the Forward Operating Center and assistance to ADPH personnel.

On May 15, PHA 11 epidemiology staff began assisting with medical surveillance to record baseline data response. They worked in conjunction with area healthcare providers and ADPH to improve the formatting of the health data collected.

Speaking on behalf of PHA 11, Health Officer Dr. Bernard Eichold said, "We want to thank all the agencies and individuals involved for their assistance."

Ruth Underwood, PHA 9 area administrator, said every employee of



the area has been impacted by the oil spill. "Staff of Public Health Area 9 and the Baldwin County Health Department have been intimately involved from day one of the crisis, and there is no way to adequately capture the volume of workload this unfortunate accident brought to our agency staff."

In Baldwin County, environmentalists placed precautionary signs on beaches and helped the recovery in many other ways. Employees rotated through service at the Baldwin County Emergency Management Emergency Operation Center and participated in numerous community meetings to help allay fears of the public. Many others responded to public inquiries in connection with the health effects of the oil spill, spoke with the news media, and appeared on broadcast segments. In addition to having staff serve at the Unified Command in Mobile, the Baldwin EOC was open throughout the months of response, and a worker was at the public health desk as long as it was in operation.

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The department began working with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to monitor, collect, and arrange for samples to be tested for oil-related compounds at the three-mile limit.

Based on data collected, swimming advisories were issued and oyster harvesting areas were closed when necessary. Staff posted warning signs on beaches to caution against short-term health effects.

Because swimming advisories were issued for Alabama, a policy was also needed to determine when it would be safe to remove an advisory. Factors considered for removal included the number of consecutive days with acceptable water quality, absence of observable oil or sheen (other than tar balls) in the water, and projected beach impact by oil-based trajectory predictions.

Ms. Underwood said, "I am grateful to our state staff for their assistance throughout this response and to the many offers of help from all public health areas. This entire response emphasized the reality that we are one health department. Whether state, area, or local staff, we work together to meet public health needs as they arise."

CASPER Rapid Assessment Survey

Following any type of disaster, public health and emergency management professionals must be prepared to respond to and meet the needs of the affected public. To that end, personnel from PHA 11 and representatives from AltaPointe Health Systems joined with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention epidemiologists to do a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) survey in coastal areas of Mobile County. Personnel from PHA 7 and PHA 9 did the same in Baldwin County. The goal of the surveys was to determine what effects the spill had had, and was having, on not only the physical health but also the mental health of residents there.

On Aug. 27, 14 assessment teams consisting of two surveyors each conducted a CASPER survey of 128 households in the Bayou La Batre, Coden and Dauphin Island communities. The next day, 21 assessment teams surveyed 168 households in Baldwin County.

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.



Public Health was among the many response agencies represented at the Unified Command Center.

The data collected was analyzed by the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects Health Studies Branch.

The final report issued by the CDC stated that the surveys' findings confirmed that there were elevated levels of depression and stress among residents following the oil spill. The surveys also detected possible effects such as respiratory ailments.

Epidemiologists collected information from emergency departments at the eight hospitals in Mobile and Baldwin counties, urgent care centers, and community health centers through the end of September. Members of the ADPH Epidemiology Division staff compiled the data and issued weekly surveillance reports.

Studies Underway

The Alabama Department of Public Health is aware of three major efforts to study the potential effects of the Gulf oil spill. These are as follows:

(1) The department is working with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to develop a plan to fund a five-year study to sample fish and seafood products on a monthly basis. Surveillance results may augment marketing efforts to promote consumption of fish and seafood from the Gulf of Mexico by

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Alabama's Health

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providing evidence the products are safe for consumption, and showing they are being sampled and tested on a continuing basis.

(2) The department is working with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to develop a plan to sample water and sand in coastal areas. This effort will help establish when swimming advisories can be lifted.

(3) The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences of the National Institutes of Health is beginning an extensive, 20-year-longitudinal study of workers directly involved with the oil spill which will include extensive study of 5,000 workers. Community input and engagement are essential for the study to be successful.

Ms. Underwood summarized, "The well may be capped, but the recovery goes on. Public health will continue to be a partner in this recovery effort for many years to come."

The following lists represent the names of departmental employees who performed tasks through deployment to EOC, Community Survey, meetings, and in other ways.

PHAs 7 and 9

Frances Ankum
Joseph Baxley
Rachel Beck
Kendall Bush
Rena Carpenter
Bradley Cooper
Aisha Davis
Kaye Dunn
Ricky Elliott
Barbara Etheridge
Ann Fuller
Kimberly Gordon
Casey Grant
Jason Gurganus
Nancy Harris
Bobbie Jo Harper
Stacy Hill
Jackie Holliday
Bryant Hollinger
Denene Johnson
Julie Joiner
Bill Kelly
David Kelly
Teddy King
Kipp Kyzar
Donald Lambert

Jennifer Lang
Cathy LaSource
David Legett
Bill Lenz
Melinda Lewis
Zane Mack
Steve Mitchell
Randi Moore
Mechelle Nowlin
Anna Odom
JoAnna Palmer
Jan Perry
Elvira Phillips
Loren Powers
Carrietta Pritchett
Natalie Quinney
Lynne Rainey
Peggy Roberts
Bart Robinson
Jason Roley
Aundrea Salter
Tina Syphrit
Suzanne Terrell
Debbie Thomasson
Peggy Thompson
Marena Truitt
Steve Wood

PHA 11

Vicki Bowers
Debbie Christian
Kymesha Coleman
Vivian De Vivo
Rosie Hires

Cheryl Lahrs
Josie Lanther
Raffias Redmon
Donna Tate
Melissa Tucker
Ann Weiss

Individuals Deployed to Mobile UC

Valerie Cochran
Josh Coleman
Camilla English
Alice Floyd
Jason Garganus
Jenni Guerry
Chris Haag
John Hankins
Tim Hatch
Chad Kent
Marilyn Knight
Monica Knight
Michele Jones
John Lowery
Andy Mullins
Teresa Porter
Jane Reeves
David Schultz
Sallie Shipman
Grover Wedgeworth

Other staff including:
Stephan Mambazo
Julia Sosa
Maury West

Conference to Focus on 'Addressing STDs in a Whole New Way'

Speakers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Marianne Kilgo of the Dallas STD/HIV Prevention Training Center will be among the outstanding speakers at the 2010 STD Training Conference Nov. 14-17 at Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach.

Tony Kennon, City of Orange Beach Mayor; Dr. Charles Woernle, Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention; and Ruth Underwood, Area Administrator for Public Health Area 9; will welcome participants. Anthony Merriweather, STD Director, invites

interested persons to attend, particularly nursing and social work staff. "Addressing STDs in a Whole New Way" is the conference theme, and speakers and topics include the following:

- Norm Fikes, CDC - National STD Update
- David Johnson, CDC - Using a Planned Approach to Address STD Disparities
- Jo Valentine, MSW, CDC - STD Disparities in the United States: Challenges and Opportunities
- Patricia Jennings, DrPH, PA-C, UAB - STDs and Adolescents

- Brandon Kinard, RN - Testing and the Alabama Department of Corrections
- Marianne Kilgo, Dallas STD/HIV Prevention Training Center - Safety in the Field and in the Clinic
- Lawrence Robey, MD - HIV in Alabama: A Historical Perspective
- Sharon Massingale, PhD - What's New at the State Lab?

Breakout sessions include the following leaders and subjects:

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Infant Mortality in Alabama Reaches All-Time Low in 2009

The Alabama Department of Public Health announced that the infant mortality rate of 8.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2009 was the lowest ever recorded. This represented 513 infant deaths, also the fewest ever and 99 fewer than in 2008 when the rate was 9.5.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "We are encouraged by the significant progress made in lowering our infant death rate. Alabamians should be proud of the efforts made to address our traditionally high infant mortality rate."

- The infant mortality rate for black infants (13.3 per 1,000 live births) was the lowest it has ever been, and it was very close to the 2006 national rate for blacks at 13.2.
- The white rate of 6.2 is also the lowest in history. The white rate, however, continues to be above the national average of 5.6 in 2007.

Declines were seen in the percent of pregnant women who smoked and the percent of births to teens. Infants of mothers who smoke were 41 percent more likely to die. Infants of teen mothers are 68 percent more likely to die.

A decline was seen in the percent of women who received adequate prenatal care, and infants of mothers who receive less than adequate prenatal care have a 12 percent increased risk of dying in their

first year. A decrease was seen in the number of babies born at low birth weight (less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces) and these babies are 20 times more likely to die than infants of normal weight. Increasing the percent of women who receive adequate prenatal care and decreasing the percent of low weight babies represent opportunities to further impact the infant mortality rate.

"We must remain committed to initiatives that improve our state's infant mortality rate," Dr. Williamson said. "We are pleased to see the reduction in tobacco use among expectant mothers. We want to continue to reduce the tobacco usage statewide, particularly among expectant mothers."



Ansley White, daughter of Jora and Louis White of Montgomery, weighed a healthy 7 pounds, 10 ounces at birth. Jora is training coordinator with the Bureau of Professional and Support Services.

Area Nutrition Director Urges Healthier Lifestyles

Public Health Area 2 Nutrition Director Shelia Osborn recently spoke at the Decatur Public Library on the topic, "Is your lifestyle putting you at risk?" Her upcoming discussion of the relationship between lifestyle choices and diseases such as diabetes and heart disease was featured in an Aug. 11 article in the Decatur Daily.

In the article she mentioned the regional habits that lead to poor lifestyle choices. "Rarely does one attend a meeting or gathering - business, social or religious - without food being offered," she said. "Couple that with a sedentary lifestyle, and our bodies begin their demise long before they should."

Ms. Osborn spoke about the risk factors for developing certain diseases so people can identify them and efficiently monitor their own health and diet. For example, exercise is key for those prone to diabetes.

Her experience includes work in long-term care and rehabilitation, hospitals, a dialysis clinic and the Cooperative Extension System. A graduate of Auburn University, she completed her graduate work at Alabama A&M University.

Jean Fulton, director of Nutrition Services of the WIC Program, Bureau of Family Health Services, said, "You are a great example of the public health spirit with the community work you do in addition to ADPH responsibilities."

The program was sponsored by a federally funded Library Services and Technology Act grant administered by the Alabama Public Library Service and Friends of the Library. The grant also provided funds for the library to purchase more than 400 books related to health and education.



Shelia Osborn

PHLIP Builds on Promising Foundation for Electronic Lab Data Exchange

Representatives from the Public Health Laboratory Interoperability Project, known as PHLIP, spent the week of Aug. 9 at the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL) as a part of their mission to enable sharing of influenza laboratory data utilizing the PHLIP standard electronic laboratory surveillance message from state public health laboratories to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Association of Public Health Laboratories and CDC lead the PHLIP initiative whose goal is to establish messaging standards and technical architecture to support secure, multi-directional electronic exchange of laboratory data.

An internal overview document states that the project “promotes effective collaborations that strengthen the public health laboratory community. Sharing laboratory data between public health partners and across public health domains is essential for public health reporting and planning, and crucial in responding to outbreaks, events and emerging health threats.”

Laboratories at all levels are facing challenges in efficiently and effectively sharing data among themselves, and with their clinical and private sector partners. Promoting and supporting the PHLIP effort furthers the goal of nation-wide electronic laboratory data exchange - a major priority for public health.

A project goal is to improve the IT infrastructure for information exchange between laboratories and the CDC. Ultimately, this will provide the infrastructure for exchanging data with Health Information Exchanges.

“This was a very positive experience for the BCL,” Laboratory Director Sharon Massingale said. She further stated, “Taking a part in this process places our laboratory in position to begin sharing influenza data electronically to the CDC and not via fax, phone call, or e-mail.



Shown are Neelima Vundela, Jerry Sable, Brenda Ryals, David Sanderson, Linda Cohen, Lauren Cammack, Keith Higginbotham, Joanna Roberson, Darryl Pendergrass, Jeannine Parker, Marian Woodman, Dr. Sharon Massingale, Ron Howard.

Next year, data on salmonella and shigella will be sent to the CDC by electronic messages”.

Lauren Cammack is the PHLIP Laboratory Testing Project Champion. Other team members include Joanna Roberson, Microbiology Laboratory Manager; Jeannine Parker, Influenza Subject Matter Expert; Keith Higginbotham, PHLIP Lead/Project Manager; Darryl Pendergrass/Ron Howard, LIMS Administrators; Brenda Ryals, PHINMS System Administrator; Neelima Vundela, Integration Administrator and HL7 Expert; and Marian Woodman, Laboratory/Office Administrator; and Sharon Massingale, Laboratory Director.

The PHLIP Team Project Manager Linda Cohen and Consultant Jerry Sable of the St. John Group and Technical Architect David Sanderson of Labpoint met with Keith Higginbotham and other members of the staff to develop a plan for Influenza Electronic Surveillance Messaging to CDC.

Setting up laboratory surveillance messaging to CDC is often a slow and difficult process, Sable said. The Alabama lab has three advantages over other state labs that made this process quicker and easier.

1. The Alabama lab has a very well configured laboratory information system.
2. The lab already had experience sending electronic surveillance messages within Alabama.
3. The lab has three people trained and experienced in using the Rhapsody messaging management system.

In addition to these advantages, the Alabama lab has microbiologists administering its laboratory information system. This bridges the gap between lab expertise and information technology that exists in most state labs.

Dr. Massingale said she was delighted to hear these encouraging comments and also to learn that the PHLIP Team thought that they were leaving the BCL having made more progress to date than any of the other state laboratories to which they had been dispatched.

This accomplishment is expected to place Alabama in the upper tier of state laboratories with regard to information exchange. The PHLIP Channel Newsletter reported that as of Sept. 17, 2010, 17 state laboratories, including Alabama’s, are either in production or have passed content validation. There were only about 13 when the team visited the BCL.

Jackson County Goes Pink for Breast Cancer

The Jackson County Health Department went pink by buying and wearing pink T-shirts Oct. 15 to help raise support and awareness for the cause of defeating breast cancer. The public health employees did their part to help the Scottsboro Fire Department raise \$18,000 for the Susan G. Komen Foundation and the Beauty and the Beast, a local nonprofit organization to aid those battling the disease.

"We are very proud of Jackson County as a team and we all work together for the good of the people in Jackson County," said Denise Beal of Jackson County Lifecare.

"Being a part of breast cancer awareness is very special to us."

Rebecca Varner coordinated the fundraising effort within the health department.

Shown are (Bottom from left) Rebecca Varner, Amy Chapman, Winfred Cotton, Denise Beal.

(Middle from left) Alice Mitchell, Brenda Rogers, Melissa McLaughlin, Stefani Grider, Lynn Sisco.

(Back row from left) Nita Nichols, Penny Roney, Kim Phillips, Jean DeBose, Dory Galloway.



Retirees

July

Phyllis Gilchrist
Epidemiology

Clariece Howse

Morgan County Health Department

Jeanie Lambert

Wilcox County Health Department

Rhonda Long

Montgomery County Health Department

Kim McNeil

Mobile Laboratory

August

Annie Bishop

Tuscaloosa County Health Department

Christine Collins

Food, Milk and Lodging

Mona McNeal

Houston County Health Department

George Moore

Montgomery County Health Department

Sandra Sanders

Houston County Health Department

Shelia Williams

Public Health Area IV

September

Bonnie Jordan

Public Health Area V

Mary Mitchell

Washington County Health Department

Bernice Robertson

Home and Community Services

Patricia Williams

Public Health Area III

Campaign Promotes Diabetes Awareness At the Gas Pump

Gas-pump topper billboards are a part of a diabetes awareness campaign in Alabama. The billboards are placed at 53 Murphy Oil Stations (at Wal-Mart stores) and 70 stations from other oil companies which are located throughout the state of Alabama. A total of 13,022,200 impressions were made for the campaign which began in September.

Evaluation of this billboard campaign will be conducted by the National Institutes

of Health. NIH is tracking the number of toll-free telephone calls to 1-800-438-5383 from Alabama area codes 205, 251, 256, 334 and 938 made during September. Some of the topper billboards will remain in place as long as November.

For more information, contact Lamont Pack, Director, Diabetes Prevention and Control Branch, (334) 206-2062, or by e-mail at lamont.pack@adph.state.al.us.



Alexis Griffin and Jennifer Pugh read a diabetes awareness message as they pump gasoline at a station in Montgomery.

Radiation Control Provides Hands-on Training to Area Responders

Industrial accidents, fires and weather-related incidents can occur that involve the use or transportation of radioactive material in Alabama. Radioactive material can also be used by terrorists. Expanded Radiological Emergency Response Team (ERERT) members play a vital role in protecting the public during any emergency which involves radioactive material within the state.

To help prepare local teams, the Office of Radiation Control conducted a hands-on training event on handling radioactive materials Aug. 11 in Montgomery. The purpose of this training was to provide instruction to designated environmentalists and nurses throughout the state who most likely would work as subject matter experts with incident commanders, such as local law enforcement.

James McNees, director of the Office of Radiation Control, said that during the past year, ERERT team members have been deployed three times. When called to respond, they coordinate with the incident commander and communicate with the Office of Radiation Control.

Responsibilities include providing care for the injured, establishing a restricted area boundary, monitoring for radiation contamination, and possibly conducting a field wipe test for contamination. ERERT members are expected to follow guidance from the Office of Radiation Control and other designated persons in order to protect themselves and others.

Four stations were set up to instruct participants in smaller groups. These included training in monitoring for contamination and establishing a restricted boundary, conducting field wipe tests, tracking sources of information, and verifying measurements. This was a joint training event with the Center for Emergency Preparedness.



The Office of Radiation Control conducted hands-on ERERT training for local teams on Aug. 11. Participants from throughout the state learned about monitoring for contamination, establishing the restricted boundary, conducting a field wipe test and other skills. Photos by Mary Conway



Conference, continued from page 3

- Tom Robertson - Community Partnerships and Community Outreach (HIV)
- Lawrence Robey, MD - Presenting to Present
- Marilyn Knight, RN - The Importance of Rapid Customer Service in Disease
- Marianne Kilgo and Anthony Merriweather - Internet Referrals
- Michelle Thomas - Expanded Case Management/VCA Refresher
- Agnes Oberkor, MSN, RN - Update for Health Professionals
- Programmatic Challenges/Issues - Anthony Merriweather

Nov. 1 is the registration deadline for this conference. The registration form is available at www.adph.org/STD/. A special low room rate of \$75 per night plus tax is offered for a single or double room at the resort. The booking ID number is 7994.

Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program Expands, Coordinator Hired

Five additional county health departments now have WIC peer counselors to promote breastfeeding as the preferred method of infant feeding. Alexis Aday, who formerly worked with breastfeeding mothers at the Montgomery County Health Department as WIC coordinator, has been employed to coordinate the growing program.

Research indicates that breastfeeding provides multiple health benefits for mothers and babies, and peer counselors help increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates. Peer counselors are current or former WIC participants who breastfed exclusively for six months. They are hired to provide support and basic breastfeeding information to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

A total of 13 sites now have breastfeeding peer counseling, and four more are slated to start programs soon. Sites with existing breastfeeding peer counseling programs are Blount, Dallas, Eastbrook Training Clinic, Lee along with Lee County Head Start, Mobile (Keeler), Pike and Women's Center in Mobile. The following counties have been added to

the program: Etowah, Houston, Lowndes, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa county health departments. Counties which will start breastfeeding peer counseling programs in the near future are Baldwin (Robertsdale), Colbert, Jefferson and Morgan county health departments. Further expansion is planned to include the following counties: Autauga, Bibb, Baldwin (Bay Minette), Barbour, Calhoun, Lauderdale, Marengo and Marshall.

"The program allows the opportunity to offer basic breastfeeding education to WIC moms while providing extra encouragement and support to those choosing to breastfeed," said Ms. Aday. "We look forward to the continued expansion."

A major goal of the WIC Program is to improve the nutritional status of infants, so WIC mothers are encouraged to choose breastfeeding.

"Many mothers choose to breastfeed because of the many health benefits," Ms. Aday said. "When a woman has her first prenatal appointment, she is provided

with breastfeeding information. The peer counselor contacts the mother during pregnancy to answer any questions about breastfeeding. She continues to provide breastfeeding support after delivery. The additional support helps increase the duration of breastfeeding and results in a mother reaching her breastfeeding goal."

Breastfeeding has become very popular in the RSA Tower in Montgomery. A Mother's Room is located on the 13th floor of the building which also houses the state WIC office. The room provides a quiet, private space to use for pumping when a breastfeeding mother returns to work.



Alexis Aday

ACE Conference Offers Tools for Community Development

Public Health was well represented at the Alabama Communities of Excellence Conference Sept. 23 at the Renaissance Hotel and Conference Center in Montgomery. Among the programs exhibiting were ALL Kids, Diabetes, Get 10,

Nutrition, Minority Health, Women's Health, Rural Health, Oral Health, Social Work/ Men's Health, and Tobacco/Substance Abuse.

ACE is a comprehensive, three-phase approach to economic and community development for

cities with populations between 2,000 and 18,000. ACE partners from the private sector, governmental agencies, and universities work with each community to successfully achieve the vision and goals created during the ACE program.



Environmentalists Walk for a Cure

Area Ten Public Health Environmentalists Cyndi Tereskiewicz and Doug Turnbull teamed up to raise funds and public awareness in the fight against breast cancer by walking in the Susan G. Komen "3-Day for The Cure."

As part of this event, participants are challenged to walk 60 miles. That is 20 miles each day! Donations raised by the walkers are invested in breast cancer research and community programs. This challenge, which is held annually at locations across the United States, gathers women and men from all aspects of society to join in a common goal. Ms. Tereskiewicz and Turnbull joined forces with 2,400 other walkers Oct. 22-24 in Atlanta to finalize their journey.

While training for the event the two logged in over 1,200 miles. More importantly they have collected over \$6,700 in donations.

This year in Atlanta the Susan G. Komen walkers collected over \$6.1 million dollars. Ms. Tereskiewicz and Turnbull both agree it is not a question of "WHY" they invested so much time and effort into this, but "WHY NOT?"

Both have friends and family who have suffered with breast cancer. In 2000 Ms. Tereskiewicz was diagnosed and treated for breast cancer. She is presently cancer free. In February of this year her mother died of cancer. Turnbull spent nearly 10 years working in a cancer research facility before joining the health department. His mother survived breast cancer and his grandmother died of this disease.

It is not too late to make a donation! To help sponsor them with a donation or to learn more about the Susan G. Komen walk, visit the web page at www.The3Day.org.

Facts:

- One person is diagnosed with breast cancer every 3 minutes in the United States.
- Men also are susceptible to breast cancer but are far less likely to be diagnosed or seek treatment.



Doug Turnbull and Cyndi Tereskiewicz make the victory sign in their quest to raise funds and awareness in the fight against breast cancer.

AHRQ Releases New Spanish Language Guides for Patients

Women's health issues and treatments for high cholesterol are among the highlighted topics in the new series of Spanish language guides now available from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality of the Department of Health and Human Services. The series of free evidence-based guides is designed to help Spanish speakers understand and compare the risks, benefits and side effects of treatments for eight health conditions.

The guides provide valuable information that patients can use in talking with their clinicians. Half of the topics cover health issues specifically for women, including guides on controlling gestational diabetes during pregnancy, deciding to induce labor, and comparing core needle biopsy to surgical biopsy for breast lesions. Other guides cover treatments for high cholesterol, osteoarthritis

of the knee, and the use of insulin analogues for treating type 2 diabetes.

"Many Spanish speakers don't have access to credible, easy-to-understand information about health care conditions and their treatment options, and that can be a significant barrier to seeking medical care," said Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D., AHRQ director. "These guides represent important resources that will help encourage patients to seek care and work with their doctors to discuss all of their treatment options."

Dr. Clancy added that AHRQ's 2009 National Healthcare Disparities Report shows that while the quality of health care is slowly improving for the nation as a whole, for many measures the report tracks, it is getting worse for Hispanics. The new publications are part of AHRQ's growing inventory of

plain-language, English and Spanish guides that summarize the scientific evidence on various health conditions so that consumers can learn more about the effectiveness and risk of different treatment options. In addition to the new guides, AHRQ previously released Spanish-language guides on nine other topics, including oral medicines for type 2 diabetes, pain medicines for osteoarthritis, medications for adults with depression, and treatments for osteoporosis and prostate cancer.

To access all of AHRQ's Spanish-language comparative effectiveness guides for patients and consumers, go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/informacion-en-espanol/> or call AHRQ's Publications Clearinghouse at (800) 358-9295. For AHRQ's entire inventory of free Spanish-language consumer health information products, go to www.ahrq.gov/consumer/espanoix.htm.

Southern Health Association Honors Hankins, Parikh

Two departmental employees were presented awards by the Southern Health Association at the association's annual awards luncheon Sept. 16 in Franklin, Tenn. Eight states are affiliated with the Southern Health Association, and only five awards are given each year.

State Public Health Nursing Director John Hankins of Montgomery was chosen as winner of the Ficquett-Holley Award. Ashvin K. Parikh of Selma, assistant area administrator for Public Health Area 7, was named recipient of the Howell Special Meritorious Service to Public Health Award.

The Ficquett-Holley Award is presented to an individual, a group of individuals or organization to honor outstanding and continuous service to, involvement with and support of public health, particularly in the field of prevention.

Hankins, 2010 Ficquett-Holley Award recipient, has been described as someone who brings out the best in others as a mentor, leader and role model. Nominators noted he is "loved statewide for helping nurses practice the way they should – by using and promoting proper standards of care. This is a passion that not only keeps his nurses safe, but ensures patient safety too."

Letters of nomination stated that Hankins "works closely with his staff, always has time to answer questions, and is well respected for involving his nurses in the decision making and planning process."

Beyond his everyday work, he graciously volunteers his time with other public health and community organizations and continues to advance his nursing education by working on his Ph.D.

The Howell Special Meritorious Service to Public Health Award is presented to an individual, a group of individuals or organization to honor outstanding and continuous service to, involvement with and support of public health, particularly in the field of prevention.

In letters of support, Parikh was praised for his unselfish service, both to the association and in his community. Supporters wrote of his "clear enthusiasm" and effectiveness. He has been employed with the department since 1986.

As an active member of Selma civic organizations, he was credited with always going above and beyond to serve those in need throughout the region in assuring that sorely needed public health care would be available in several of Alabama's most vulnerable rural counties. Additionally, he has helped build new programs and ensure opportunities for community growth.

Nominators said, "This person selflessly gives back to the community and is efficient, dedicated, and professional in delivering public health services. In addition to those adjectives, this year's award recipient is also described as "organized, understanding, and always willing to roll up his sleeves and 'jump in' wherever he's needed."



Ashvin Parikh receives plaque from SHA President Jan Cooke.



President Jan Cooke congratulates John Hankins.

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 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 Scott McGlothen
Des Moines, Iowa

**Charles Brown
Tony Dunklin
Rachel Durden
Benny Lee
Lew Wallace**
Technical Services Unit
from Arpan K. Limdi
Robert W. Sharpe
Birmingham, Ala.

**Brenda Brugh
Betty Thomas**
Center for Health Statistics
from Barbara Burnette
Albuquerque, N.M.

Karl Bryant
Health Promotion
& Chronic Disease
from Heidi Hataway
Leslie Knox
Brandi Pouncey
Montgomery, Ala.

Connie Danner
Center for Health Statistics
from Elizabeth Sudano
Troy, Ala.

**Carolyn Duck
Guy Nevins
Ray Sherer**
Health Provider Standards
from Debbie Kelley
Sylacauga, Ala.

Carol Gerard
General Counsel
from Ruth Underwood
Robertsdale, Ala.

**Nicole Henderson
Reginald Strickland**
Center for Health Statistics
from Oscar Canada, Jr.
Merrillville, Ind.

Winona Lawson
Center for Health Statistics
from Marsha Bates
Alabaster, Ala.

Sandra Levert
Center for Health Statistics
from Tanya White
Birmingham, Ala.

Gloria Lewis
Tuscaloosa County
Health Department
from Renee Cole
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

**Marengo County Health
Department Staff
Public Health Area 7 Staff**
from R. A. "Bobby" Pritchett
Thomaston, Ala.

**Jeff Meank
Bartow Riley**
Health Provider Standards
from Sandra M. Pace
Atlanta, Ga.

Veronica Moore-Whitfield
Center for Health Statistics
from Sean Danford
Dawsonville, Ga.
Tammy Dees
Tickfaw, La.
Bryan Hall
Waterloo, Belgium

Kathie Peters
Center for Health Statistics
from Anita Phillips
Daleville, Ala.

Roger C. Prewett
Technical Services Unit
from Linda U. Jordan
Glenn Pittard
Ashland, Ala.

Kim Smith
Center for Health Statistics
from Micki Elkins
Pinson, Ala.

Reginald Strickland
Center for Health Statistics
from Nathaniel Christopher
Burnaby, British Columbia
Annie and C. Roy Moore
Orlando, Fla.

Jackie Holliday
Public Health Area 7
Video Communications Division

Maury West
Professional and
Support Services
from Thomas Moody, M.D.
Birmingham, Ala.

Geneva Thomas
Center for Health Statistics
from Elinor Stallworth Saxton
Little Rock, Ark.

Sherry George Honored for 45 Years of Service

Chris Haag, deputy director of the Bureau of Family Health Services, presents a 45-year service pin to Sherry George. Ms. George, director of the Women's Health Division, has been employed with the department for 35 years.





Calendar of Events



October 26

Skin Care and Incontinence (Home Health Aides and Attendants), 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528.



November 16

Hospital Associated Infections - An Alabama Update, 1-4 p.m.

For more information contact Tracy Shamburger, (334) 206-5940.



November 17

Minority Health Series, 2-3 p.m.

For more information contact Elana Parker, (334) 206-7980.



December 2

Gulf Coast Oil Spill Update: Update on the Public Health Response, Noon-1:30 p.m.

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



December 7

Caring for Patients with Arthritis (Home Health Aides and Attendants), 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528.



December 9

Marketing for Success in the Family Planning Clinic, 2-4 p.m.

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



December 10

Community Management of High-dose Radiological Events, Noon-1:30 p.m.

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



December 14

Health Care Reform, Noon-1:30 p.m.

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

May 12-13, 2011

55th Annual Alabama Public Health Association Educational Conference, Renaissance Hotel and Spa, Montgomery.