

# 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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## Oil Spill, continued from page 1

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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## Oil Spill, continued from page 2

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

**R**epresentatives 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

**T**he 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.**



## Campaign Promotes Diabetes Awareness At the Gas Pump

**G**as-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.*

## 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

# Radiation Control Provides Hands-on Training to Area Responders

**I**ndustrial 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/](http://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

**F**ive 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

**P**ublic 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

**A**rea 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](http://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

**W**omen'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](http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/espanoix.htm).

# Southern Health Association Honors Hankins, Parikh

**T**wo 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

**I**f 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.

**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

**C**hris 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.**