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Alabama's infant mortality rate is lowest ever

Preliminary statistics show Alabama's infant mortality rate for 2000 decreased to 9.4 per 1,000 live births from the 1999 rate of 9.8. The 2000 rate is the best ever recorded, according to the Center for Health Statistics of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Teen births and smoking during pregnancy are considered risk factors for infant mortality. One of the positive trends relating to this improvement includes reduced births to teenage girls. The percent of births to teenagers in Alabama declined to its lowest level in at least a decade, 15.7 percent. Another encouraging change was the decline in smoking by mothers from 12.8 percent in 1999 to 12.5 percent in 2000. The rate of smoking for teenage mothers also declined from 15.4 percent in 1999 to 15.1 in 2000.

The infant mortality rate declined for both whites and blacks. The rate of 6.5 per 1,000 births was the lowest ever attained for white infants, and the rate of 15.4 for black infants was the third lowest rate ever achieved for this group. One disturbing and lingering aspect of infant mortality is the disparity between the races, with the black rate being over twice as high as the white rate.

State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson said, "The serious problem of infant mortality is extremely complex and will require major social changes to reach the governor's goal to reduce infant mortality by 25 percent by the end of the decade."

Women intending to have children should be encouraged to

- 1) stop smoking,
- 2) obtain early prenatal care,
- 3) position infants on their backs to sleep,

- 4) plan their pregnancies,
- 5) consume adequate amounts of folic acid, and
- 6) delay pregnancy beyond their teenage years

Currently, the Governor's Task Force on Infant Mortality is in the final stages of completing its work to develop recommendations to address infant mortality. The Task Force will put forth recommendations in the near future.

Expanding family planning programs can help to prevent unplanned pregnancies. Nearly half of all births in Alabama are unintended, according to Rhonda Stephens, project coordinator of the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS). An initiative (Plan first) was launched in October 2000 by the Alabama Department of Public Health to offer family planning to more Alabama women than ever before.

The decrease in infant mortality occurred despite three disturbing trends. The percent of low birth weight babies increased from 9.3 percent in 1999 to 9.7 percent in 2000. The percent of mothers receiving adequate prenatal care fell slightly from 77.8 percent in 1999 to 77.2 in 2000. . . And, multiple births rose from 3.0 percent of all births in 1999 to 3.4 percent in 2000. Multiple births are usually associated with smaller babies who have additional health complications at birth and early in life.

Among the counties, Crenshaw had no infant deaths in 2000, for an infant mortality rate of 0.0. Other especially low counties were Dallas (2.5), Autauga (3.4) and Washington (3.8). The highest rate was in Bullock County with a rate of 24.4 infant deaths per 1,000 births. Other counties with particularly high infant mortality rates were Russell (22.7), Sumter (22.6) and Choctaw (20.1).

Mortality.....continued on page 3

Team effort is successful in protecting children from rabies threat

The efforts and outstanding cooperation of numerous public health employees and others succeeded in locating and ensuring that two children who had moved to Alabama from another state received vital rabies post-exposure treatment.

The children had been exposed to a rabid bat in their out-of-state home. Rabies treatments had begun there, but before the children had finished receiving their complete series the family relocated to Sumter County. The children had failed to receive their final two immunizations, and were behind in one of them.

An out-of-state health department notified Dr. Bill Johnston, state public health veterinarian, about the need to assure that these children were treated as soon as possible. Johnston e-mailed Public Health Area 7 administrators Ruth Underwood and Ashvin Parikh, environmental director Robert Jones and nutritionist Denise Pope to request their assistance. Ms. Pope forwarded the information to Lucy S. Gallman, area social work manager for Choctaw, Hale, Marengo and Sumter counties.

Area staff mobilized quickly on these children's behalf and as a result of the determined efforts by many individuals, these youngsters received the needed vaccine by the following afternoon.

"It was an outstanding example of simply 'getting the job done' involving several counties, areas, bureaus,

divisions, state office," said Dr. Johnston.

Ms. Gallman added, "This case is a good example of the fine work of Health Department staff that often goes unrecognized."

After Ms. Gallman had been notified, she contacted social worker Stacy Hill to alert her to this case and to allow her to initiate a search of all databases available to identify and locate the children in question. Staff had a mailing address, but no telephone number for the family.

The following day social workers coordinated with both area environmentalist Robert Jones and county environmentalist Byron Webb. They were able to locate the mother at her place of employment and made face-to-face contact to inform her about the need to have her children's post-exposure treatment completed.

Resources were needed

Meanwhile, the social work staff attempted to locate resources for obtaining the vaccine and for free care from a medical provider because the children were not currently on Medicaid. Social workers also obtained specific information from the out-of-state agency about the type of vaccine the children had been receiving. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was contacted about possible problems associated with children being off schedule with their rabies series.

Rabies.....continued on page 3

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.

ALABAMA'S HEALTH

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Donald E. Williamson, M.D. State Health Officer
 Jim McVay, Dr. P.A. Director, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease
 Arrol Sheehan, M.A. Editor
 Toni Prater Graphic Designer
 Marion Wilford Photographer

Informational materials in alternative formats will be made available upon request..

Mortality.....continued from page 1

"I am committed to improving the lives of Alabama's youngest citizens," said Gov. Don Siegelman. "Our early learning report gives us a road map for the next 15 years, and today's announcement shows that we are already making progress in improving early childhood health."

- 1) Alabama's infant mortality rate is the lowest in history for 2000 at 9.4 infant deaths per 1,000 births.
- 2) The number of teen births is less than 10,000 for the first time in over 40 years.
- 3) The black infant mortality rate is more than twice as high as the white infant mortality rate. This racial disparity has been increasing in recent years and is counter to the Surgeon General's national priority to reduce these disparities.
- 4) Infant mortality in Alabama remains much higher than the national rate despite the significant progress in the last decade.

Rabies.....continued from page 2

The local physician's office assisted by completing an indigent request for the vaccine and placing the order with a pharmaceutical company. Social work staff located a supply of vaccine at Druid City Hospital in Tuscaloosa and obtained an agreement from the hospital for loan, with the agreement that these doses would be returned when the local doctor received the medication from the company.

The children's mother came to the Sumter County Health Department where staff assisted her in completing a Medicaid application and in making WIC appointments for both her children. Ms. Hill then accompanied the mother and children to the physician's office to await the arrival of the vaccine.

In the meantime another social worker, Margaret McGough, drove to Tuscaloosa (126 miles, round trip) where she obtained the vaccine, returned to Sumter County, and delivered the medication to the doctor's office at 4:55 p.m. in time for the children to have the vaccine administered.

The children were scheduled to receive their final dose of post-exposure treatment two weeks later. All of the clinic clerks, Bonnie Stapp, Van Chaney and Ophelia Donegan, were of assistance in routing the multiple phone calls necessary to coordinate this work quickly and

efficiently to the social work staff who were occupied on this case. All clinic work proceeded without interruption during this day-long effort.

"All this activity involved interaction with an assortment of agencies and private providers, and I feel that it is important for the staff who worked so well together to benefit two small children to be recognized for their tireless efforts," Ms. Gallman said. "This was an example of how health care is supposed to work."

Satellite conference to discuss new breast and cervical cancer treatment program

An educational satellite conference to discuss the new breast and cervical cancer treatment program is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 13 from 12 noon to 1 p.m. central time. This conference will discuss legislation which provides benefits to uninsured women in need under the new Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act.

For more information contact Deborah Pennington at 334-947-6206, or e-mail at DeborahPennington@adph.state.al.us.

Alabama adoptees show interest in accessing their original birth records

One year ago Alabama law was changed to allow adult adoptees to access their sealed, pre-adoption birth certificates without having to first obtain a court order. During the past year the Center for Health Statistics of the Alabama Department of Public Health has processed almost 1,500 requests from adoptees asking for a copy of their records from their sealed files.

Alabama law directs the State Registrar to establish a new birth certificate after an adoption, legitimization or paternity determination takes place. The new birth certificate is substituted for the original birth certificate in the files, and the original birth certificate and evidence of adoption, legitimization or paternity determination are placed in a sealed file. These files do not contain medical or other types of information about the birth parents. The Center for Health Statistics maintains nearly 200,000 sealed files.

The August 2000 revision to the vital records law also permits a birth parent to place information in the sealed file of a child who was adopted. Under the new law the birth parents of an adopted child may state their wishes regarding being contacted, and may provide medical history information on the adoptee's birth family. Approximately 80 birth parents have placed information in the files with the vast majority of parents who responded stating they wished to be contacted by the adoptee.

"The information provided is considered a private communication from the birth parent to the child, and no copies of this form will be given to anyone other than the child," said Dorothy Harshbarger, center director.

The law allows only the adopted person named on the birth certificate to request a copy of the contents of the sealed file. The person must have been born in Alabama, must be 19 years of age or older, and must have had an original birth certificate removed from the files due to an adoption, legitimization or paternity determination. A non-refundable \$20 fee is charged for processing requests. The

ages of adoptees requesting information from their sealed files range from 19 to 80 plus.

A Request for Pre-Adoption or Other Birth Certificate from an Alabama Sealed File or a Contact Preference Form for Parents of Adopted Children Born in Alabama can be requested by letter addressed to Center for Health Statistics, Vital Records - Adoptions Section, P.O. Box 5625, Montgomery, Ala. 36103-5625.

For additional information call (334) 206-5426. Forms and information may also be obtained through the Alabama Department of Public Health website at <http://www.alapubhealth.org> under vital records: <http://204.29.113.114/Chs/adopt.html>.



Cassie Johnson pulls a sealed file for Reginald Strickland. Oftentimes staff must search multiple records to locate these files, especially when the births occurred in large counties.

Retirees

The following employees retired recently:

Jannie Brown, Montgomery County Health Department
Peggy Register, Public Health Area 8
Barbara Taramangos, Colbert County Health Department

Gatlinburg or Hilton Head? Walking competition participants are winners

Team walking was encouraged through a summer contest in which Food and Fitness Program participants could walk or participate in other exercises for the equivalent of the distance to either Hilton Head, S.C., or Gatlinburg, Tenn., from Montgomery. Food and Fitness is a voluntary program to learn healthy eating and physical activity lifestyles.

The competition began on June 3 and lasted through July 28. Each day walking teams recorded the distances they trekked in areas around the RSA Tower or participated in sports such as bicycling or swimming. Each had either the beach or the mountains as their vicarious destination.

State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson attended a special event to recognize employees who had met their fitness goals. Participants celebrated by sharing delicious, lowfat and healthful foods they had prepared at a luncheon to celebrate the walking teams' success.

Scoring the most points was the team from Finance. Brenda Anderson, Delois Baxter, Marilyn Dozier, Janet Grafton, Vickie Hurst, and Carolyn Johnson traveled 540 miles to Hilton Head.

The Professional Services team of Dennis Blair, Miriam Gaines, Fay Smith, Janice Terrell and John Wible went the 500 plus miles to their Gatlinburg destination.

The team from the Bureau of Home and Community Services made it to Hilton Head by walking 479 miles. The team consisted of Tracey Cannon, Daytha Grier, Glenda Harris, Carol Heier, Cheryl Laricey, Carolyn Morgan and Sonya Salum.

Also walking to Hilton Head was the Information Services team of Janette Cawthon, Phyllis Mardis, Kimberly Parker, Debbie Patterson and Crystal Steen. Collectively, they completed a total of 450 miles.

The Radiation Control team of Tonya Appleyard, Mike Cash, Richard Glass, Myron Riley and David Turberville went 435 miles to reach Gatlinburg.



Janet Grafton, Carolyn Johnson, Vickie Hurst and Carol Heier (left to right) were among the Food and Fitness Program participants gathering at the conclusion of the competition. The blenders were going to stir up lowfat fruit shake drinks and the table's centerpiece featured hiking boots and beach mementos.

Success stories

Another enjoyable summer class featured Food and Fitness participants Toni Smith, Brenda Anderson, Traci Cannon and Dennis Blair who shared their struggles and successes with changing their lifestyles. Their take home message is summarized as follows: "You **can** make changes for a healthier life style. Find some physical activity you enjoy doing and do it. Find those lower calorie foods you enjoy and eat them."

Miriam Gaines, Nutrition and Physical Activity director and program leader, commented, "The interesting point made by all was how much better they feel, both mentally and physically. I especially liked the part when they said the could feel the difference after eating high sugar, high salt foods...it made them feel bad now!"

Department receives mini-grant

The Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Inc., awarded a \$3,000 mini-grant from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency for a pilot program to provide free radon test kits to new mothers in Colbert County. A radon information packet will be presented to each new mother as she leaves the hospital.

Each packet will contain a coupon for a free radon test kit.

Jim McNees, director of the Radioactive Materials Inspection Section of the Office of Radiation Control, who serves as the Health Department's radon contact, made the grant request.

Child Restraint
Education
Fire Prevention
Occupant Restraint
Seat Belt Survey
Trauma Registry

Alabama Injury prevention division

What everyone needs to know about residential fires

What is the public health problem?

- * Residential fires account for 66 percent of fire-related injuries and 82 percent of fire-related deaths.
- * In 1998, approximately 400,000 residential fires killed nearly 3,600 persons in the United States and injured 16,000.
- * Persons at greatest risk are children aged 5 and younger, adults aged 65 and older, African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, rural dwellers, and persons living in substandard housing or older manufactured homes.
- * Residential fires result in direct property damage of about \$5 billion per year.
- * Preventing fire-related injuries costs far less than treating them: \$1 spent on smoke alarms saves \$69.
- * Almost half of home fires and three-fifths of fire deaths occur in homes with no working smoke alarms.

Install and maintain a smoke alarm on each floor and outside each bedroom.

- * Use smoke alarms with a lithium-powered battery that lasts up to 10 years.
- * Test smoke alarms monthly.
- * After 10 years replace entire smoke alarm.

Create a family fire escape plan and practice every six months.

- * Get out as fast as possible and go to the designated meeting place.
- * Do not stop to gather any belongings.
- * Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.
- * If smoke is in a room, stay low or crawl to the exit.
- * If you cannot escape, put wet towels or fabric around doors to block off smoke, crawl to a window, and open it. Yell out the window for help and wave a sheet or cloth for attention. If there is a phone, call for help.

Prevent a fire from starting in your home.

- * Never leave food cooking unattended.
- * Do not smoke in bed, and never leave burning cigarettes unattended.
- * Keep matches and lighters away from children. Never leave burning candles unattended.
- * Never leave young children alone in a home.
- * Keep space heaters at least three feet from anything that can burn.

Teach children to stop, drop and roll.

- * Stop where you are.
- * Drop to the ground.
- * Roll over and over with your hands covering your face.

References

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/safeusa/fire/firesafe.htm>
2. Preventing Residential Fire-Related Injuries. Program in Brief. Department of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. January 2001.

Compiled by Sondra Reese, M.P.H.

Injury News

Published By

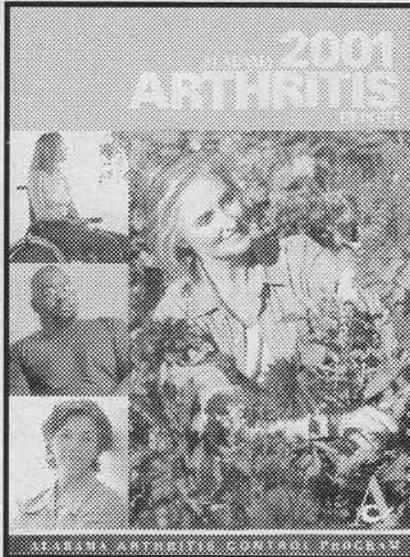
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Carol F. Mysinger, M.Ed., M.P.A.....Director
Lynn B. Williams, M.A.....Editor

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Alabama 2001 Arthritis Report now available

The Alabama 2001 Arthritis Report is now available online by clicking on the front page of the Alabama Department of Public Health web site at <http://www.alapubhealth.org>.

The data summarized in this report indicate that



- Arthritis affects more than a million people in the state of Alabama.
- The disease is more common in the elderly, but it also disproportionately affects women and persons with lower education levels—even after accounting for age differences.
- Alabama's

estimated share of arthritis-related costs might be as high as \$243 million annually for medical care alone. Further, limited access to care, in part due to cost barriers and a limited number of specialty physicians and facilities in the state, increases the burden of

arthritis on Alabama.

Information provided in this report includes summaries of the following:

- what arthritis is
- arthritis prevalence
- risk
- access to health care
- cost issues
- treatment guidelines
- the Alabama Arthritis Control Program.

“Ongoing efforts to identify persons with arthritis and to enhance the quality of care afforded to those individuals must be continued and strengthened,” said Linda Austin, director of the Arthritis Prevention Branch. “This along with other challenges has been addressed through the efforts of many statewide partners through the Alabama Arthritis Prevention and Treatment Coalition. This coalition has developed the Alabama Arthritis Control Plan.”

The coalition will meet on Sept. 20 to provide information on the progress of each of the five workgroups. For more information contact Ms. Austin at (334) 206-5603, e-mail laustin@adph.state.al.us.

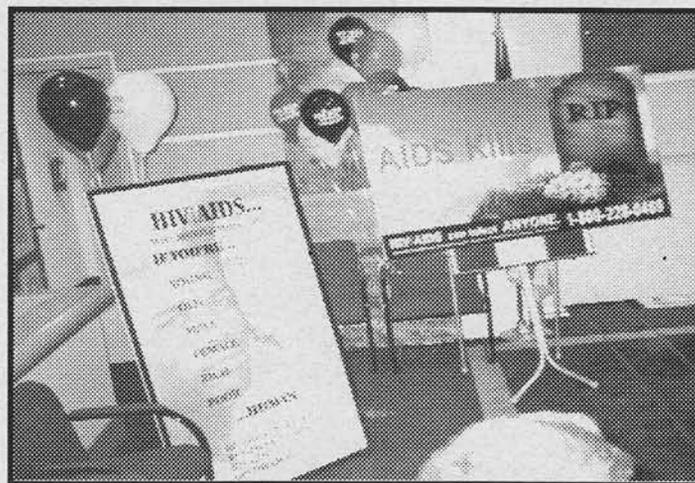
African American HIV/AIDS awareness campaign launched

In April 1999 HIV/AIDS in African Americans was declared a growing public health crisis because of the high and rising rates of infection among African Americans in the state.

While slightly less than 26 percent of Alabama's total population is African American, in 2000 nearly 70 percent of newly reported cases were in African Americans. Last year in the state, African American males represented 44.4 percent of HIV/AIDS cases and African American females represented 25.9 percent.

In response to the declaration of this health crisis, the Alabama Department of Public Health's Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control helped form a partnership with Alabama State University to develop an African American HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign. The campaign includes culturally sensitive HIV prevention messages delivered through brochures, billboards, radio

HIV/AIDS.....continued on page 8



Campaign posters, printed materials and a television public service announcement were unveiled at a news conference which included an address by State Rep. Laura Hill.

and television talk shows, and public service announcements that will reach across the state.

“It is our hope that by using an array of communications modes and a consistent HIV prevention message, we may continue to increase awareness and decrease infection rates for all people, especially among African Americans,” Jane Cheeks, director of the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Division, said.

The severe impact of HIV/AIDS on African Americans and the disparities in health outcomes are evident in almost every county in Alabama. Because a person can be infected with HIV for many years before showing symptoms, many people who are infected are unaware that they have the virus and may unknowingly transmit the infection to other people.

Knowing one’s HIV status is the first step in seeking medical intervention and gaining access to effective treatment and prevention strategies. Free testing is offered at every county health department and at many AIDS service organizations.

For more information about HIV/AIDS in Alabama, call the Alabama HIV/AIDS hotline at 1-800-228-0469.

*Medical information provided by Jack Hataway, M.D.,
director of the Chronic Disease Division*

Why does fat around the abdomen predispose individuals to heart disease? Are there any guidelines such as waist measurements for individuals to determine if their stomach is too big?

Abdominal obesity is a term which is meant to indicate that a person has excessive body fat located in his or her abdominal area. This is also known as having an apple-shaped body. In men, this pattern of excess body fat is associated with increased risk of heart disease. In women, it has been related to increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and breast cancer. One way to clinically assess someone for having this pattern is to measure the person’s waist size. If a male’s waist exceeds 40 inches and a female’s waist exceeds 35 inches, he or she is considered to have abdominal obesity.

Rattlesnakes, horses and information—Food program supervisors hold annual workshop

Public health environmentalists from all over the state of Alabama made the annual pilgrimage to Twin Pines Resort and Conference Center in Sterrett, Ala., for the Food Program Supervisor’s Workshop this past Aug. 1 and 2. I have made the trip from Tuscaloosa since the meeting’s inception several years ago and have grown to look forward to it every year. This year’s agenda proved to be interesting, and more importantly, valuable for the environmentalists’ everyday work experience.

As in past years, a representative from a major food chain attended to present a quality assurance program from the industry’s perspective. This year’s speaker, Larry Burke from Wendy’s, the nation’s third largest hamburger chain, gave us some insight into the quality assurance program that Wendy’s uses to assure that the safest possible product is prepared for the consumer. He talked extensively about the inspection program and audits that he and 16 other QA specialists coordinate to evaluate the sanitation levels in Wendy’s retail operations as well as

their suppliers.

Some legal aspects of the food program were covered by Greg Locklier, Assistant General Counsel, ADPH. We discussed the difficulty in getting arrest warrants obtained and issued as well as other possible avenues for notifying a violator and achieving compliance. Additionally, we heard details on the food worker training program recently implemented in Jefferson County, a foodborne outbreak in Tallapoosa County, recent media attention in Public Health Area 1 over a restaurant permit suspension, the Food and Drug Administration’s “credentialing system,” and the statewide survey to determine what major risk factors for foodborne illness were prevalent in food service establishments. Needless to say, this was a wealth of information that could be applied to our daily tasks.

A useful exercise in which we participated was an evaluation of some real food sanitation “situations” that have occurred in various counties around the state. To have a problem posed and then talk about the various

Workshop.....continued on page 10

Smokeless tobacco campaign hits minor league baseball fields

Smokeless tobacco use among boys in Alabama far exceeds the national average, according to information provided by the Office on Smoking and Health/National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Tobacco-free coalitions across Alabama and the Tobacco Branch have been taking action to combat this disturbing trend by holding activities in connection with three minor league baseball teams to discourage smokeless tobacco use.

A survey of Alabama youth in grades 9-12 indicated that 22.1 percent of the boys and 1.8 percent of girls had used smokeless tobacco in the past month. The national average was 9.3 percent. The Smokeless Tobacco Campaign targets

young males by raising public awareness of the dangers of smokeless tobacco utilizing cable television and radio public service announcements.

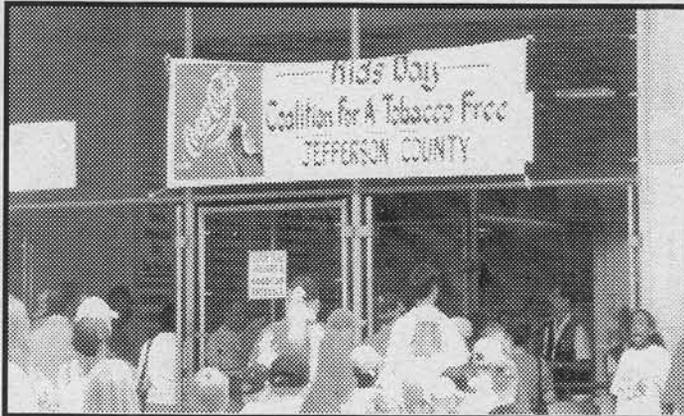
Activities with the Birmingham Barons, Huntsville Stars and Mobile BayBears included a 30-second anti-smokeless tobacco radio spot during each of the 140 games, an outfield billboard, one "live" 10-second announcement about smokeless tobacco during each game, a one-half page ad in the program yearbook, player/mascot appearances, and a video board spot, public address announcements, message center or marquee advertisements during home games.

A 60-second anti-smokeless tobacco radio spot was aired from May through July every other week on three days a week for a total of 428 spots on radio stations in the Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa areas.

A 30-second anti-smokeless tobacco TV spot was aired for 20 weeks from April through mid-August for a total of 4,320 spots in the Anniston, Auburn/Opelika, Birmingham, Dothan, Gadsden, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, Selma, Troy and Tuscaloosa areas.

According to Barry Riddle, media/youth coordinator with the Tobacco Branch, "This campaign has generated numerous telephone calls for information about quitting smokeless tobacco."

Tobacco coalitions have also supported the campaign. Theo Smith, Area 4 tobacco prevention control coordinator, and the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Jefferson County sponsored this year's "Kids Day" with the Birmingham



Events such as Kids Day at the Hoover Metropolitan Stadium help raise awareness that spit tobacco is no longer the accepted social norm in baseball.

Barons at the Hoover Metropolitan Stadium. Clowns, games, a balloon artist, a kids' play area, prizes and plenty of anti-tobacco information were available.

Connie Kohler, University of Alabama at Birmingham evaluator for "Not-On-Tobacco," a tobacco reduction/cessation project for youth, explained, "The Coalition's goals are to prevent youth initiation, eliminate

exposure to tobacco smoke,

promote quitting, and eliminate disparities of tobacco use and medical treatment among population groups. Kids Day with the Birmingham Barons gave the Coalition an opportunity to raise awareness about how spit tobacco is no longer the social norm in baseball."

Elsewhere, the Mobile County Health Department and the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Mobile County sponsored "Trashing Tobacco for Bay Bears Tickets" on May 31 in support of World No Tobacco Day with the Mobile BayBears.

Local radio stations conducted live remotes encouraging listeners to stop by and "trash" tobacco products or tobacco advertisements or tobacco brand promotional items (such as hats, T-shirts and lighters) in exchange for a ticket to the BayBears game.

In Huntsville, the branch, in collaboration with the Partnership for a Drug Free Communities and the Huntsville Stars mascot, participated in the partnership's annual membership drive. More activities are planned with the mascot during Red Ribbon Week in October.

For more information about smokeless tobacco use prevention efforts, contact Barry Riddle, Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch, Chronic Disease Prevention Division, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease, at 334-206-5604, e-mail at briddle@adph.state.al.us.

Workshop.....continued from page 8

avenues for compliance and correction is an excellent learning tool. From seize and hold dispositions to permit suspensions, we considered proper methods for fairly yet reasonably enforcing the regulations.

Without a doubt, the highlight of the meeting every year for me is the "round table" type discussion time in which any and all of the workshop participants can contribute ideas and comments. This year we briefly covered topics such as: the battles that we all fight with temporary food regulation and enforcement, mobile unit guidelines, and the upcoming food rule review and probable changes.

What I come away with more than anything else every year from this workshop is that the problems we encounter in the food program in Tuscaloosa are certainly not unique. Yes, foodborne outbreaks DO occur beyond the county line. People DO try to sell barbecue off card tables in other counties as well. Stories of a horse head found in a cooler, a rattlesnake squirming under a fryer, and an establishment operator with a freezer full of rotting seafood refusing to dispose of it make me realize that we are all on the same team.

I can chuckle at these horror stories, as can you, because we all have our own stories to tell. Sometimes it does me good just to know that others are in the trenches just like my staff and me working towards the same goal – protecting the public's health.

By *TOLLIE MEGGS*
Food Sanitation Supervisor
Tuscaloosa County Health Department

Commendations

Health department employees who are listed here have received letters of commendation recently. To recognize other employees, please send letters through your supervisors or the state health officer to *Alabama's Health*.

Sandra Blakely
Mack Carmack
Julian McLendon
Nick Moss
Henry Roddam
Michael Smith
Danny Williams
Video Communications Division

from Tim Hatch
Montgomery, Ala.

Hazel Davis
Center for Health Statistics

from Tracy L. Bryant
Ellicott City, Md.

Debbie Dawson
Monroe County Health Department

from Lynne B. Noah, R.N.
Monroeville, Ala.

Jason Dixon
Public Health Operation Resources Management

from Lynn Williams
Montgomery, Ala.

Nina Haynes
Center for Health Statistics

from Tamara Dehnert
Amy Temmins
Oakland, Calif.

Commendations.....continued on page 11

One-woman play to benefit breast cancer screening

A special one-night performance of the play, "When Life doesn't turn out the way you planned" will be held Thursday, Sept. 20 at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery. Proceeds from ticket sales will benefit the Joy to Life Foundation which supports screenings and early detection of breast cancer for the medically underserved.

The Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection program provides mammograms to women younger than 50 if they are symptomatic or if an abnormality is detected on a clinical breast examination by a contract provider. Realizing that early detection increases a woman's chances for long-term survival, the Joy to Life Foundation supports mammograms for medically underserved women in this younger age group who otherwise meet guidelines.

The play was written by Kevin W. Sowers, R.N., M.S.N., associate vice president, Hospitals and Clinical Facilities, Duke University Health System. Renowned actress Greta Lambert will play the lead role in the ASF production. She will be directed by Rodney Clark and the original musical score is by Karren Pell, herself a breast

cancer survivor.

"This demonstrates what communities can do when they work together," said Suzanne Churchill, outreach coordinator. Other voluntary programs to benefit breast cancer operate in Baldwin and Talladega counties.

A reception will be held at 6 p.m. and an after-theater dessert and discussion will follow the performance. Those wishing to purchase the \$100 tax-deductible tickets should call the ASF box office at 334-271-5353 for reservations.

Commendations.....continued from page 10

Dorothy Harshbarger

Tracey Taylor

Albert Woolbright, Ph.D.

Center for Health Statistics

from Margy Trotter

Atlanta, Ga.

Nicole Henderson

Center for Health Statistics

from Cheryl A. Wiscount

Tremont, Pa.

Mark McDowell

Tuberculosis Control

from John Parks

Montgomery, Ala.

Cathy Molchan

Center for Health Statistics

from Benja Morgan

Opelika, Ala.

Theresa Mulkey

Center for Health Statistics

from Sandra Dutreau Williams

Perkins, Okla.

Everlene Nelson

Conecuh County Health Department

from Lynne B. Noah, R.N.

Monroeville, Ala.

Lynn B. Williams

Health Promotion and Chronic Disease

from Sgt. Johnny King

Selma, Ala.

September is Baby Safety Month,
National Sickle Cell Month,
National Cholesterol Education
Month

Calendar of Events

September 2-8 National 5-A-Day Week

September 4-7 Alabama Primary Health Care Association/National Coalition of Black Lung and Respiratory Disease Clinics, 16th Annual Conference, Perdido Beach Resort, Perdido. For more information contact Al Fox or Angie Blevins, (334) 271-7068.



September 5 Annual WIC Vendor Training. For more information contact Forrest Jones, (334) 206-2907.



September 6 Alabama Department of Public Health Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m. For more information contact Jim McVay, Dr.P.A., (334) 206-5600.



September 11 Hope for Health: Enhancing Partnerships Between State Health and State Education Departments, 12 noon-3 p.m. For more information contact Jack Hataway, M.D., (334) 206-5616.



September 12 Hypertension and Stroke, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Fay Smith, (334) 206-5655.



September 13 Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Law, 12 noon-1 p.m. For more information contact Deborah Pennington, (334) 947-6206.



September 25 Flu and Pneumonia: Home Health Aide/Home Attendant Continuing Education, 1:15-3:15 p.m. For more information contact Brenda Elliott, (334) 347-2664, extension 402.



September 26 Outcome Based Care: Start to Finish, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Gayla Hollis, (334) 347-2664, extension 403.



October 3 Alabama AIDS Symposium, 10-11:30 a.m., HIV/AIDS Update: AIDS Resistance Testing -Dr. Philip Kaiser; Neuropsychiatric Complications in HIV Disease-Dr. Sanjay Sharma. For more information contact Brenda Cummings, (334) 206-5364.

October 4-5 14th Annual Alabama AIDS Symposium, Civic Center, Montgomery. For more information contact Brenda Cummings, (334) 206-5364, or Tony Thompson, (334) 272-6666.