

ALABAMA'S

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Influenza vaccine shortfall mobilizes public health

The nation's severe influenza vaccine shortage announced on Oct. 5 has involved nearly every public health employee in concerted efforts to provide influenza vaccine to high-risk individuals in Alabama. On influenza vaccination days other public health activities operated with skeleton staffs in efforts to accommodate the flood of people seeking flu shots.

When Chiron said it would be unable to deliver its share of inactivated influenza vaccine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices chose to restrict vaccination to selected target populations. The Alabama Department of Public Health adopted these recommendations for use in health department clinics and has communicated them to providers in the private medical community.

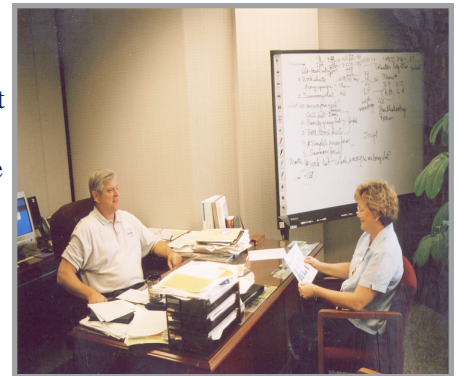
The Alabama Department of Public Health is partnering with the private sector in efforts to ensure that those persons at highest risk of severe complications of influenza have access to influenza vaccinations. The Alabama Department of Public Health is working with physicians, pharmacists and other vaccine providers through the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, the Alabama Pharmacy Association, the Alabama State Board of Pharmacy and the Alabama Retail Association to inform the public that flu shots will be restricted this season.

"We are asking that pharmacies target their vaccine initiatives to high-risk individuals. Both small and large pharmacies have been very cooperative in directing all

available influenza vaccine for this season to those individuals at highest risk and health care workers who provide their direct care," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. "We urge other healthy Alabamians to forego or delay influenza vaccination this year."

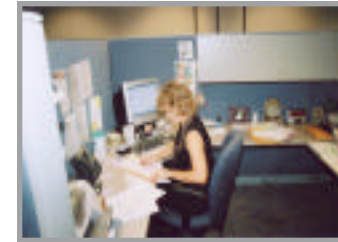
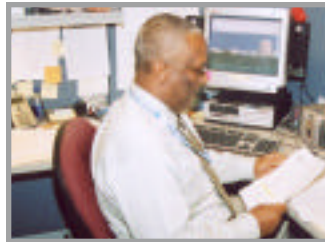
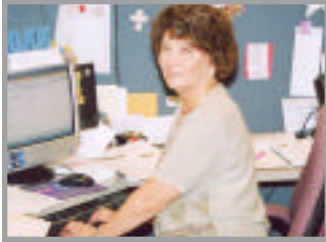
Healthy adults have been asked to defer receiving their influenza shots so the elderly and other high-risk patients can be immunized. Vaccine is to be reserved for babies and toddlers ages 6-23 months; people 65 or older; anyone with a chronic condition such as heart or lung disease; pregnant women; nursing home residents; children on aspirin therapy; health care workers who care for high-risk groups; and anyone who cares for or lives with babies younger than 6 months.

Dr. Williamson held several news conferences broadcast statewide by satellite asking providers to target



Making plans for handling the unexpected and severe influenza vaccine shortage are Winkler Sims, director of the Immunization Division, and Valerie Cochran, R.N., B.S.N.

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Volunteers from offices throughout the RSA Tower telephoned the state's medical providers to determine their influenza vaccine inventories and needs.

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

influenza vaccine to those at highest risk and informing the public about the situation and health department's three-pronged strategy to maximize delivery of influenza vaccine to individuals in high-risk groups.

Unprecedented survey of medical providers conducted

The Alabama Department of Public Health undertook an unprecedented massive telephone survey of the health care community in Alabama to better understand how much influenza vaccine has been ordered and how much was available. Department staff telephoned approximately 7,000 medical providers statewide on Oct. 18 and 19 to determine their inventories.

In a news release issued prior to the calls, Dr. Williamson said, "I want to notify these facilities about the upcoming calls and urge them to have someone available to respond to the telephone survey. This information will help us determine where in the state there are pockets of need and will help us decide how to distribute the vaccine the department has received."

Medical providers were asked about the number of doses of influenza vaccine they ordered, the number of doses they had on hand, the types of vaccine ordered and manufacturer, the number of doses received, and number of doses needed.

"I know many people are anxious about where they can obtain a vaccination this year," Dr. Williamson added. "Because there is no evidence that influenza is circulating in Alabama, the situation is not urgent, and it is possible that additional vaccine will be made available."

"By working with health care providers the department wants to assure to the extent possible that persons at high risk of complications from influenza receive influenza vaccine," Dr. Williamson said.

Dr. Charles Woernle, assistant state health officer for disease control and prevention, said, "Very likely there will not be enough vaccine to handle the need. This survey will provide background information about how much is consumed in a year."

"Another benefit is to show the public the department is taking action to help mitigate the situation," Dr. Woernle added.

Each surveyor maintained a summary log of calls.

Survey results describe unmet need

The survey of physicians, pharmacies, nursing homes, hospitals, assisted living facilities and specialty care

assisted living facilities found that approximately 1.24 million doses of vaccine were ordered in the private sector, about 293,000 doses had been delivered and there was an additional unmet need of 700,000 doses for high-risk individuals.

A total of 1 million Alabamians were in the targeted groups. Nursing homes were especially hard hit with a need totaling 44,000 doses, but they received only 800 doses (less than 2 percent of the need). The department has developed and begun implementing a three-pronged approach to maximize delivery of vaccine to individuals in high-risk groups.

Mass immunization clinics held

In the first phase, county health departments administered approximately 60,000 doses of vaccine on Oct. 26-30. Doses were allocated to counties based upon a formula which included need, doses ordered, and size of the target population. Except for Jefferson and Mobile counties, all counties divided their doses into quartiles and gave one-quarter each day based on the first letter of the last name. This helped to minimize the wait and maximize the opportunity for people to access the vaccine. Another 92,000 doses were made available Nov. 16-17. With these 92,000 doses, the department will have offered vaccinations for up to 150,000 of the estimated 700,000 high-risk individuals in need.

Allotment to go to those with severe physical limitations

The second phase centered on persons with severe physical limitations who may not have been able to access vaccination. In an effort to provide vaccination venues for those unable to wait in lines or have friends or family



Employees from different disciplines at the Montgomery County set up traffic lanes to distribute influenza vaccine appointments at Paterson Field.

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Montgomery County Health Department employees wore rain gear and braved the cold to make it more convenient for high-risk people to schedule flu shots. Shown are Mitzi Chesser and James Reynolds.

wait, the department plans to allocate its last allotment of vaccine, approximately 35,000 doses, for vaccinations by appointment or other process to minimize lines. While the demand will exceed the supply, this will provide an opportunity for individuals previously unable to be vaccinated to seek an immunization.

Distribution to the private sector

The third phase involves the private sector,

which traditionally purchases and delivers 90 percent of influenza vaccine. The private sector has received 53,000 doses, but will still have more than 450,000 high-risk individuals unvaccinated. Alabama will receive 128,000 more doses of vaccine in the private sector this year. Of these doses, 81,700 are expected before Christmas and 46,300 are anticipated in January.

The department has determined that meeting the needs of institutionalized elderly must be a very high priority. The department is resurveying nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and specialty care assisted living facilities to determine their current vaccine need. After acquiring this information, home health agencies, Elderly and Disabled Waiver providers, AIDS service organizations, hospitals and other identifiable high-risk groups will be surveyed. Vaccine will be directed to these unmet needs from shipments expected in November and December.

Any unobligated doses available before Christmas will either be allocated to providers in the private sector or will be purchased by the department to meet unmet need. Doses which do not arrive until January will be allocated based upon need and the



Administrative staff assist patients at the enclosed mall location.

status of influenza at that time.

VFC supplies sufficient

While adults in targeted groups will likely experience a shortfall of vaccine, providers for children eligible for the Vaccines for Children program are expected to receive all of the vaccine ordered.

VFC providers will be surveyed to assess their usage and need. If availability exceeds needs, the department will petition CDC for permission to reallocate vaccine to non-VFC targeted populations. Also, given that vaccine supply will not meet anticipated need, the department has encouraged nursing homes to have antivirals available to control outbreaks which may occur. Discussions have also taken place about the potential need to limit visits in an outbreak setting.



Immunizations are given in an orderly fashion. Nurse Pat Schloeder (at right) conducted numerous news media interviews. Central office nurses such as Annie Vosel (left) assisted.

No cases yet

Fortunately, as of mid-November there has been no confirmed influenza in Alabama this season. Other states have recorded cases, and most viruses isolated are the influenza A(H3N2) strain found in the vaccine.

What can be done to avoid getting the flu besides getting a flu shot?

- * Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water.
- * Cover your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze, preferably with a facial tissue or your arm, not your hands.
- * Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- * When you are sick, keep your distance from others to



Doren Watkins administers a flu shot. The shopping mall site afforded patients and caregivers ample parking spaces.

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Department receives praise from the public for flu vaccinations

During the past month the department has had the tremendous task of trying to vaccinate citizens of the state with limited influenza vaccine supply. In an effort to reach those greatest at need, the department made the decision to hold a number of mass vaccinations held throughout the state for at-risk citizens. The undertaking required considerable coordination, patience and hard work by many health department staff.

Citizens across the state took notice of the work being done by Public Health and have raised their voices in praise for the staffs who diligently provided the much needed service in the state. Below are excerpts of letters written to health departments and newspapers commending Public Health on a job well done.

- * “Montgomery County residents, although some are disappointed, can be proud of the job the department staff did under circumstances they never expected and did not create. Talk about lessons of mass disruption. We appreciate your dedication and hard work under an extremely difficult situation. Bravo.”—*Montgomery*
- * “The lines moved smoothly and swiftly. The health care personnel were very concerned and helpful to people in wheelchairs and walkers by assisting them upon entering and exiting the facility. They were just plain kind and concerned for all. Kudos for a job well done to Mr. Ashvin Parish and his staff.”—*Selma*
- * “I would like to thank all of the people who organized and conducted the flu shot clinic at Belk Center this week. Everyone was so nice and made all of us senior citizens feel comfortable. It was really well organized. Thanks again.”—*Tuscaloosa County*
- * “My wife and I were two of the very large, sleepy, disgruntled, out-of-sorts crowd getting flu shots at the health department this morning. In the midst of our growing discomfiture and complaints, came a ray of sunshine in the person of your office manager Ms. Lylita Crayton. I do not believe I have ever seen someone so completely take charge of a semi-hostile crowd in such a pleasant and caring manner as she.” — *Lee County*
- * “I write to express my satisfaction regarding the efficiency

of service provided by the [Macon County] staff. The workers were courteous, helpful and engaging.”—*Tuskegee*

- * “On behalf of the Wiregrass Adult Care Centers, administered by Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center, and individuals with disabilities, I want to express my appreciation to the staff of Houston County Health Department and its Administrator, Ms. Peggy Blakeney, for the tremendous job they did in administering flu shots at the Westgate Recreation Center.”—*Dothan*
- * “I’m sure the health department personnel must have been stretched to the limit, but everybody was cordial and helpful even at 6 a.m. when I picked up my ticket. I was amazed at how many people they were able to vaccinate in a very short amount of time.”—*Montgomery*
- * “The health department is to be commended for their flu shot distribution program. The plan was not only thoughtfully designed, but it was carried out efficiently by congenial staff. Many thanks for your fair and considerate handling of this important matter.”—*Tuscaloosa*
- * “The Colbert County Health Department should certainly be commended for their handling of the recent flu saga. To my knowledge there has never been a more determined effort by a public facility to care for a disgruntled group of elderly and disabled clients.”—*Tuscumbia*
- * “I think the people of Lauderdale County would be very remiss if they did not stop to thank the staff, and those responsible for giving the flu shots at the health department last week.”—*Florence*
- * “Letters to the editor very often take the form of a complaint. This one does not. Rather it is written to express the highest praise to the local health department for their well planned and well organized handling of the flu virus vaccine administration.”—*Tuscaloosa*
- * Just a “thank you” note to say how well the day went yesterday for receiving the “flu shot.”
Everyone was so helpful and friendly and no long lines or extensive waiting to receive the flu shot.
Thank you all (Russell County) for a job well done.
—*Phenix City*

Influenza.....continued from page 4

- protect them from illness. Stay home from work or school until you recover.
- * Contact your medical provider if you have severe symptoms that you think require medical attention.
- * Do not share items that go into the mouth.
- * Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces if someone

- in your house has a cold or the flu.
- * Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. These areas act as portals for bacteria and viruses to enter your body.

New training system offers benefits for employees and department

Staff training will soon become a little easier for the Department of Public Health with the help of a new learning content management system. The new system will automate the training process and improve the department's workforce development program, as well as offer many new benefits for both employees and the department as a whole.

"The goal of this system is to offer a more efficient method of providing emergency preparedness information; allow unlimited access to training opportunities; and help better engage our volunteer workforce," said Michele Jones, director of the Training Unit, Office of Professional and Support Services. "It will also allow us to track the credentialing of our workforce during emergencies and improve the process for department supervisors to track employee training."

The department is required to implement a learning management system as part of its Bioterrorism Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and using

an automated training system developed by the Department's Alabama Public Health Training Network the department decided to create its own system that would include a more robust system that would include all types of training.

This new system will be SCORM compliant, meaning that it will have the ability to share data and interface with any other training systems that are also SCORM compliant. The department's specific plans are to be able to interface with its South Central Public Health Partners which include Tulane University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the departments of health in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

"We also want to be able to interface with any other states who have access to our programs through other Web sites," said Jones.

The department's learning content management system is scheduled to become operational in January 2005.

Company honored for adopting radon-ready new construction techniques

The Alabama Department of Public Health presented a plaque to Adams Homes, LLC, on Nov. 18 in recognition of Adams Homes, LLC's support of lung cancer prevention by adopting radon ready new construction techniques for all their new homes in Madison County.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Radon enters the home from the soil below and occurs in hazardous concentrations in many homes in Madison. By installing a radon escape stack from the soil below the slab

to the open air above their new houses, Adams Homes, LLC, is helping to reduce future lung cancer rates in Madison County. If the radon escape stack is installed during construction it is far less costly than having to put one in after the home is finished in response to a high radon test.

The wording on the plaques reads "Presented by the Alabama Department of Public Health in Recognition of Adams Homes, LLC's support of lung cancer prevention by adopting radon ready new construction techniques for all their new homes in Madison County."

WAKA recognition

On the first Thursday of each month dedicated Public Health staff appear on the WAKA's Midday News Program's Health Segment to inform the public about important health issues and offer guidance for healthier living. To show our appreciation, each month *Alabama's Health* recognizes the staff members who take time out of their busy schedules to appear on the show.

The guest for November was Demetra Peoples, L.B.S.W., Tobacco Control Coordinator for the Tobacco Prevention and Control Division. Ms. Peoples talked about

the Great American Smokeout Campaign and the benefits of not smoking.

If you would like to appear on the WAKA Midday News Program please contact Takenya Stokes at 334-206-7026 or e-mail at tstokes@dph.state.al.us.

Distance learning pioneer announces retirement

During the past 13 years Mack Carmack has become the familiar face and voice of the Alabama Public Health Training Network, based in the Video Communications Division. Carmack will retire at year's end, concluding a long and varied professional life.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "Mack's contributions helped put us on the map for distance learning around the country." On behalf of the department, Dr. Williamson presented a plaque recognizing Carmack for his unique broadcast journalism skills and contributions to public health.

Carmack was employed in 1991 soon after the creation of a new organizational unit to prepare training videotapes. This was at a time before anyone anticipated how far distance learning by satellite would go.

Before the satellite training was initiated, employees often had to travel long distances to receive required training. The need in county health departments drove the demand for distance learning. After the idea was introduced in 1992, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and others have followed Alabama's lead in conducting training by satellite.

"Mack's many contributions to the development of our inhouse capabilities are something we are all proud of," said Dr. Jim McVay, director of the Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease. "Our success is a result of the hard work of people like Mack."

His strong work ethic began when Carmack grew up working long hours on a dairy farm and continued through his long broadcasting career and helped culminate in the annual production of more satellite distance learning programs than any other entity in this country.

A background as news director, operations manager, executive producer and anchor and in public relations helped prepare Carmack for his public health career. Each year he has been involved in the satellite broadcast of 60 to 70 programs, plus assorted news conferences, numerous tapings for public service announcements and other endeavors.

Co-workers praise Carmack's special ability to put people at ease in the often-uncomfortable setting of a television environment and his skill in helping people present information without getting caught up in the technology. His incredible abilities to make conversation, ask appropriate questions, and keep content flowing while adhering to time restrictions will be missed by all.



Mack Carmack hugs co-worker Brenda Elliott.

Carmack said, "As I begin my retirement, I continue to look back at the good times and rewarding challenges we all faced the past 13 years. I will remember my association with the Alabama Department of Public Health with great affection and hope I can continue the friendships developed over the years."

ALL Kids online applications speed enrollment process

The Alabama Children's Health Insurance Program reminds parents that online applications are being accepted and children are being enrolled into ALL Kids, the comprehensive healthcare coverage program for eligible children and teens under age 19.

In less than 30 minutes, families who visit www.adph.org/allkids can learn if they appear to be eligible for ALL Kids or other health care coverage based on their family size and income. A final determination of whether or not someone is eligible will be made by the program. This special children's health insurance provides medical services such as dental and vision care, doctor visits including check-ups, prescriptions, hospital services and more. There are no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

To be eligible for ALL Kids, a child must be under the age of 19, an Alabama resident and not covered by other health insurance. If other insurance is voluntarily dropped, there is a 90-day waiting period before application to ALL Kids can be made. The Web site offers additional eligibility information and provides step-by-step instructions on how to complete the application.

The on-line application and the "blue application" for ALL Kids are joint applications with SOBRA Medicaid, Medicaid for Low Income Families and the Alabama Child Caring Foundation. If a child is determined to be eligible for ALL Kids or one of the other programs, coverage is awarded for one year. Renewal is required each year. Applications received for children who are not eligible for ALL Kids but who appear to be eligible for one of the other programs are forwarded to that program for review.

This system was developed with a grant received from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and is made possible through the cooperation of the Alabama Medicaid Agency and the Alabama Child Caring Foundation.

For more information or to apply, visit www.adph.org/allkids or call your local ALL Kids program toll-free at 1-888-373-KIDS (5437) for an application. Parents are reminded that with healthcare coverage, children are more likely to stay healthier, receive needed immunizations, get medical attention before a small illness turns into a big one, and miss fewer school days due to illness.

Breast cancer awareness exhibit stresses early detection

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is the month of October. The "Tribe of Warrior Women" exhibit was on display at Eastdale Mall throughout the month. The "Tribe of Warrior Women" exhibit honored breast cancer survivors while building awareness and offering hope, inspiration, strength and courage. To



Beverly Jo Carswell represented the department.

conclude National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Montgomery Cancer Wellness Foundation is partnered with Eastdale Mall and Parisian to hold a Breast Cancer Survivor Fashion Expo. The Expo was held on Saturday, Oct. 30.

At the request of the Montgomery Cancer Wellness Foundation, the Office of Radiation Control participated with the "Hours for Awareness Tables." The tables were located on the perimeter of Center Court, where the Fashion Expo was held. Tables and skirting were provided by Eastdale Mall. Beverly Jo Carswell represented the office and constructed two displays. Ms. Carswell was on hand for questions during the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. to remind the public that "Early Detection is the Best Protection!"

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*.

Nicole Henderson
Center for Health Statistics

from Anne Hall
Richmond, Va.

Nicole Henderson
Kathie Peters
Karen Rasberry
Center for Health Statistics

from Martha Bostick
Houston, Texas

Alabama Rural Health Association recognizes rural health champions

In celebration of Gov. Bob Riley's proclamation of the week of Nov. 1 through 6 as "Rural Health Week" in Alabama, the Alabama Rural Health Association recognized several of Alabama's rural health champions in a ceremony was held at the State Capitol Auditorium in Montgomery on Nov. 5.

Sister Roseanne Cook, M.D., of Pine Apple (Wilcox County) was presented with the Rural Health Provider Exceptional Achievement Award. Dr. Cook is known locally as "Good Doctor Cook." She answered a call to serve the needs of society at age 40 by entering the University of Missouri at Columbia School of Medicine and is the only doctor within 25 miles of her clinic, the Grace Bussie Clinic in Pine Apple. This clinic is named after a Florida woman whose husband sent mail donations to Dr. Cook after reading about her work in McCall's Magazine. She also practices at the John Paul Jones Hospital in Camden.



Joyce Brenley receives plaque from State Treasurer Kay Ivey.

Dr. Cook sees about 30 patients each day in her clinic. House calls are a common occurrence since many of her patients have no transportation or are too ill to make it to the clinic. However, another 20 or so patients get daily checkups without leaving their homes through a biomonitoring program which is attracting national attention for its marriage of technology and affordability. By combining one of the market's cheaper biomonitoring boxes with a common digital scale and blood pressure machine, Dr. Cook can monitor patient's vital signs from their homes using only a standard phone line.

Wilcox County is one of the nation's poorest counties. According to Dr. Cook, she has received fish, venison, corn, sweet potatoes and "most everything else" from many of her patients who proudly want to pay for her services. Since many patients cannot afford to buy medicine, she keeps a large supply of free medication which she gets from

charitable sources and drug companies. More affluent physicians and hospitals also send her medical supplies.

A few years ago the God who sent Dr. Cook to help her patients in Wilcox County was there to save her in a personal crisis. While driving back to her clinic from the hospital in Camden, she stopped to help two men who appeared to be having car trouble. She was forced into the trunk of her car and driven to a remote area where shots were fired into the trunk in a murder attempt. Dr. Cook was slightly injured and managed to get out and walk a considerable distance to get help.

Joyce Brenley of Cullman County was presented with the Rural Volunteer Excellence in Service Award. Ms. Brenley is a life-long resident of Cullman County who began volunteering at the Cullman Branch of Alacare Home Health & Hospice in 2002 doing clerical work. One of the many



Sister Roseanne Cook is shown with state Treasurer Kay Ivey.

examples of the love and compassion that defines Ms. Brenley was seen when she spearheaded an effort to move a patient who had no family to assist her from an apartment that was not handicapped-accessible to one that was.

Ms. Brenley has since taken on a full-time job, but continues to use her baking skills to generate happiness by making birthday cakes for Alacare's hospice patients. She keeps a calendar of patient birthdays, finds out what each patient's favorite kind of cake is, and makes sure to have the huge, four-layer cakes at the branch office in time for staff to deliver them on patients' birthdays.

In addition, a new award, the Billie Gilliland Exceptional Contribution To Rural Accident Prevention Award was established to recognize individuals or organizations for their efforts in preventing rural accidents. The first recipient of this prestigious award was Alabama's state troopers for their continuous and courageous efforts to prevent rural motor vehicle accidents.

Rural health.....continued on page 11

Speaking of Retirement

Could You Use a Financial Planner?

Financial planning is the process of looking at the “big picture” of your financial situation. We all have financial goals—buying a home, funding our children’s education, preparing for retirement, to name just a few. Financial planning helps you set financial goals and focus on making decisions that will enable you to meet your objectives.

It is possible to act as your own financial planner with the help of books, magazines and software packages, but there may be times when you want assistance from an expert. For example, you need help with a specific aspect of your financial plan, you don’t have time to do your own planning, or you have an immediate or unexpected financial need.

Obtaining help from a professional should not be thought of as something only for the wealthy. Even people with modest incomes and financial goals can benefit from financial planning.

How to Choose a Financial Planner - Where to Start

Finding a financial planner is not as difficult as you might think. Start by getting referrals from friends and relatives. If that does not work, you might try the Financial Planning Association (800-282-7526) or the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (CFP Board). To verify that your planner is authorized by the CFP Board, call toll-free 1-888-CFP-MARK (888-237-6275) or visit the CFP Board’s Web site at www.CFP-Board.org.

Finding the Right Match

Most financial planners do not charge for an initial consultation, so you may want to interview several to find one who is right for you. Your goal should be to find someone you are comfortable with. Remember, you will be sharing personal information with your planner, so choose someone with whom you can be open and honest. Once you find a planner you like, check the candidate’s qualifications, certification, background and experience.

Financial planning covers a wide range of services, so aside from checking credentials you will want to choose a planner whose professional background suits your needs. For example, if you are interested in retirement planning, you will want an advisor with experience and expertise in

stocks and other long-term growth investments. Keep in mind, too, that many financial planners also are registered as investment advisors or hold other licenses allowing them to sell products, such as life insurance. When financial planners are not registered as investment advisors or allowed to sell other products, they may send you to specialists to help implement their recommendations.

In addition, ask prospective advisors about their approach to financial planning. Make sure that it is not too aggressive or too conservative for your personal style. Also, ask about the type of clients they work with.

You also may want to find out if you will be working with other people in the financial planner’s office. If you will, you may want to meet them, too. In addition, if the financial planner will send you to other specialists, it is a good idea to get their names and check their backgrounds and qualifications beforehand.

Consider Costs Before You Sign Up

The cost of financial planning varies dramatically, depending on the amount you invest, where you live, the services you receive and the planner’s level of experience. Because financial planners use different methods to charge their clients, be sure to ask about fees during your initial consultation.

To have your questions answered in “Speaking of Retirement,” please address them to Mike Pegues, Communications, Retirement Systems of Alabama, 135 S. Union St., P. O. Box 302150,

Rural health.....continued from page 9

This award was named after Billie Gilliland, a champion of rural health from Choctaw County, who was lost in a rural motor vehicle accident earlier this year. When the county's only hospital in Butler closed in 1993 and most of the physicians relocated, Mrs. Gilliland went to work to assure that the residents would have local healthcare available. She was able to secure the services of two physicians and became a founder of 1st Health Treatment Center in Butler.

Mrs. Gilliland was on her way to interview a Meridian, Miss. doctor who had some interest in moving to Butler when her full-size pickup truck collided with a utility truck. Her death drew special news media attention because her husband Chuck Gilliland, a state trooper, was the first law enforcement officer on the crash scene.

According to reports, there were no passengers in either vehicle, and both drivers were killed. The driver of the utility truck had been attempting to pass an 18-wheel truck when he accidentally collided with Mrs. Gilliland's truck traveling in the oncoming lane of Alabama Highway 10, a narrow, two-lane highway, between the communities of

Yantley and Lisman.



Chuck Gilliland accepts new award on behalf of the state troopers.

Alabama Statewide Cancer Registry Data Report available on our Web site

The November issue of the "Alabama Statewide Cancer Registry Data Report" contains a wealth of information on lung cancer in Alabama. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among both men and women. Lung cancer incidence rates declined by 7.2 percent between 1996 and 2002 in Alabama.

The five-page newsletter gives a statistical snapshot, including graphs, a discussion of risk factors, lung cancer survival in Alabama, the Great American Smokeout, and tobacco control ordinances.

The site also contains an ASCR pamphlet and state data report. Visit it at the following Web address:

www.adph.org/cancer_registry/.

Retirements

The following employees have retired recently from two county health departments:

Pamela Galloway - DeKalb County Health Department

Lorine Savage - Montgomery County Health Department

November is Diabetic Eye Disease Month, National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, American Diabetes Month, National Epilepsy Month, National Marrow Awareness Month, Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, Lung Cancer Awareness Month, COPD Awareness Month and Pulmonary Hypertension Awareness Month.



Calendar of Events



December 7

Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication: by Leaders for Leaders 1-3:30 p.m. - Part 1 of 2. For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



December 8

Abnormal Pap Smears, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Annie Vosel, (334) 206-2959.



December 14

Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication: by Leaders for Leaders 1-3:30 p.m. - Part 2 of 2. For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



December 16

PHALCON Update, 10 a.m.-12 noon or 2-4 p.m. For ADPH Only. For more information contact Annie Vosel, (334) 206-2959.



January 6

ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m. For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



January 12

Infection Control Update 2005, 2-4 p.m., Home Health Aides and Home Attendants. For more information contact Brenda Elliott, (334) 237-264, extension 402.



January 26

Folic Acid: Past, Present & Future, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Annie Vosel, (334) 206-2959.



February 2

Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Michele Jones, (334) 206-5655.



February 9

Contraceptive Technology Update, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Annie Vosel, (334) 206-2959.



March 2

Postponing Sexual Involvement: Abstinence Counseling and Education, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Annie Vosel, (334) 206-2959.

