

# Alabama leads the nation in satellite conference technology

The staff of the Alabama Department of Public Health now receive the vast majority of their continuing education and inservice education via satellite conferencing programs produced by the department and other Public Health Training Network program partners.

Fifty-one of the 67 counties have installed satellite downlink antennas within their facilities. During the next 10 months, nine additional counties will have satellite downlink capability as they move into new facilities as part of the Alabama Public Health Care Authority Program. The

downlinks provide convenient and efficient access for employees and community members to participate in satellite conference training and educational programs.

President Bill Clinton issued a directive to heads of executive departments and agencies on distance learning in which he stated, "Federal agencies have an obligation to provide the best training for their employees at the lowest possible cost."

The Jan. 30 presidential directive to utilize technology for training further commented, "Federal programs that provide financial support for lifelong learning should adapt to the

new opportunities technology provides."

Alabama is ahead of this trend in satellite conferencing. The Video Communications Division of the Bureau of Health Promotion and Information was established in 1990 to provide "in-house" video production and satellite conferencing for department inservice training, public relations and educational and informational programs. Between 1990 and 1994 the department produced 33 satellite conferences.

The following table indicates the growth of the training and education programs:

## Alabama Satellite Conference Facts

|  | 1995   | 1996   | 1997   |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Total Number of ADPH Participants<br>(Participants may attend multiple programs) | 15,351 | 23,340 | 44,405 |
| Average Number of ADPH Participants  | 349    | 507    | 793    |
| Average Number of AL Downlink Sites  | 7      | 36     | 50     |
| Total Number of ADPH Programs  | 44     | 46     | 56     |
| Production Cost per ADPH Participant   | \$6.88 | \$4.33 | \$2.98 |

For more information about the Video Communications Division, contact Michael Smith, Director, The

RSA Tower, Suite 900, P.O. Box 303017, Montgomery, Ala. 36130-3017, (334) 206-5618, email:

[videocomm@mindspring.com](mailto:videocomm@mindspring.com).