

ALABAMA'S HEALTH

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

WIC Participants Issued First EWIC Cards

An effort that began in 2009 with a pilot project has resulted in the successful first uses of eWIC in the East Central District.

At a March 18 news conference, State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris announced the beginning of Alabama's eWIC, which is being launched in two phases. Participants in the Alabama WIC Program in Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery counties were issued the state's first eWIC electronic benefit transfer cards.

Through this new system, benefits for WIC-approved foods are automatically entered onto a card that is similar to a debit card. This card replaces the current paper-based food instruments and cash-value vouchers which are redeemed at WIC-authorized stores statewide for WIC transactions.

Each month more than 120,000 Alabama participants at nutritional risk receive WIC benefits through all county health departments and with two private local agencies. There are currently 638 vendors in the state. In 2018, participants redeemed almost \$97 million in food instruments at WIC-authorized stores statewide.

Alabama WIC Program Director Amanda Martin said, "I want to thank all of the program staff that have been involved with eWIC implementation and

our clinic staff who see participants daily to provide WIC services. We have been working towards this milestone since 2009 and are extremely happy to begin this pilot."

Recognizing the value of eWIC, the federal Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 mandates that each state WIC agency implement an electronic benefit transfer system throughout the state by October 1, 2020.

Stacey Neumann, WIC Vendor Management director and eWIC project manager, said, "We are very excited to begin our eWIC pilot. Vendor enablement is a key piece to implementing eWIC. I want to thank all our authorized WIC vendors for their hard work in preparing for eWIC implementation."

EWIC will bring many benefits to WIC participants and authorized WIC vendors. These benefits include:

- Less stigma for the WIC participants
- Smoother transaction at the register
- Reduced time "in lane"
- Automatic electronic payments to the vendors

Ellie Taylor, Alabama Grocers Association (AGA) president, said, "AGA was proud to partner with the Alabama Department of Public Health, WIC Division, on the planning and implementation of eWIC in our state. For retailers and WIC participants, eWIC will be a tremendous improvement to the overall shopping experience with smoother transactions at the register, streamlining of processing, and reduced checkout times. Our retailers are excited to move forward with eWIC as we continue to offer quality customer service to all Alabama consumers."

The second phase of the eWIC rollout will begin April 1, and includes the remainder of the counties in the East Central and the Northeastern districts. These are Blount, Bullock, Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee,



It's a victory when eWIC proves successful at an East Central District supermarket.

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SyS Research Analyst's Article Featured in National Publication, Abstract Also Included

Alabama participates in the National Syndromic Surveillance Program. An informative description of syndromic surveillance currently found on the department's website notes that, thanks to the approximately 84 participating hospitals, 94 percent of records are available within two days of a patient's visit.

A few examples of how syndromic surveillance data is used are as follows:

- To understand drug overdoses
- Monitor disease trends
- Respond to emergencies.

An article by Syndromic Surveillance Research Analyst MisChele A. Vickers, M.P.A., of the Infectious Diseases and Outbreaks Division, Bureau of Communicable Disease, was featured in the November 2018 issue of "Syndromic Surveillance Success Stories."

An abstract on this topic also was accepted by the International Society for Disease Surveillance 2019 Conference in San Diego, California, where she gave a poster presentation. Of the 80 posters exhibited, Ms. Vickers' was selected to be among the top five. Abstracts are being published in a special supplement of the "Online Journal of Public Health Informatics."

"Alabama Department of Public Health-Syndromic Surveillance: Monitoring and Improving Data Quality," addressed the problem of data latency in limiting the department's ability to recognize and respond quickly to public health threats.

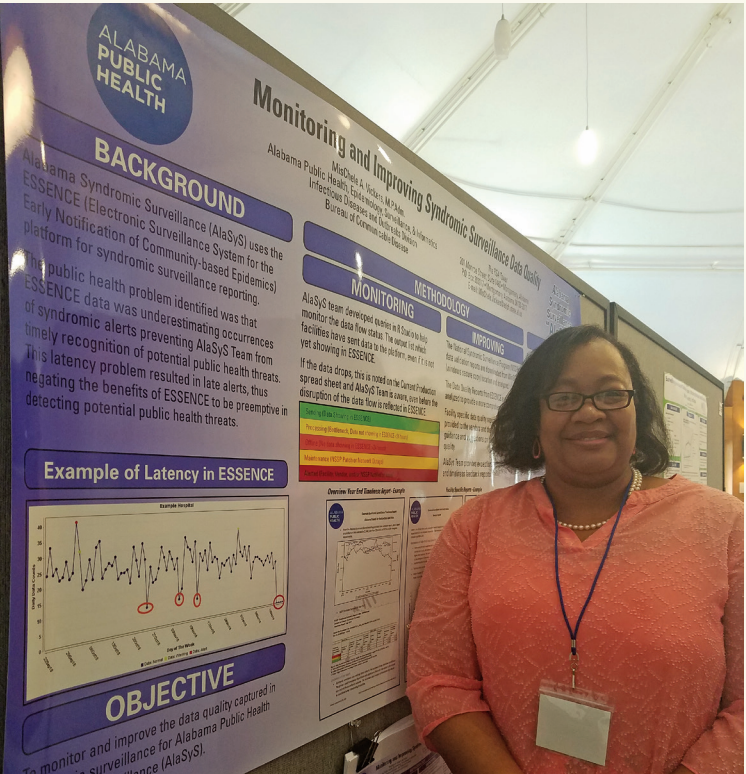
The article described the problem, actions taken, and outcome. This success story shows how the National Syndromic Surveillance Program:

- Improves data representativeness
- Improves data quality, timeliness and use

- Strengthens syndromic surveillance practice
- Informs public health action or response.

Improvements were needed to recognize and respond quickly to public health threats. Some facilities were slow to process and submit data within 24 hours of a visit, which showed a lag time of one to several days. The SyS team used the data quality reports to transition seven facilities from onboarding into production and to initiate discussions with facilities about how reporting could be improved.

Important lessons were learned through their efforts. When praised by Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mary McIntyre, Ms. Vickers wrote, "This is a great accomplishment for all of us."



MisChele A. Vickers, M.P.A.

Alabama Department of Public Health

Mission

To promote, protect, and improve Alabama's health.

Vision

Healthy People. Healthy Communities. Healthy Alabama.

Core Values

Excellence, Integrity, Innovation, and Community.

Alabama's Health

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- Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H. State Health Officer
- Jamey Durham, M.B.A. Director, Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support
- Arrol Sheehan, M.A. Editor
- Noelle Ahmann Graphic Designer

WIC, continued from page 1

Clay, Cleburne, DeKalb, Etowah, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Randolph, Russell, St. Clair, Shelby, Talladega and Tallapoosa counties. The pilot area has 36,000 participants, 27 clinics and 192 WIC vendors.

After the pilot, implementation in other districts is scheduled as follows:

- June: Northern District (approximately 24,961 participants, 15 clinics, 143 WIC vendors)
- July: West Central and Jefferson Districts (approximately 24,967 participants, 20 clinics, 130 WIC vendors)
- August: Southeastern, Mobile and Southwestern Districts (approximately 34,292 participants, 35 clinics, 174 WIC vendors)



Administrative Support Assistant Linda Russell, left, hands a card to Chatrese Russell, whose family participates in WIC at the Montgomery County Health Department. Ms. Russell was one of the first to receive the eWIC card on March 18.

Audit Acknowledges Department Safeguards State Property

Once again, the Alabama Department of Public Health has received a Certificate of Commendation from the Chief of the Property Division of the State Auditor's Office acknowledging that all non-consumable departmental assets with an acquisition cost of \$500 or more have been located and accounted for.

The Logistics Division of the Bureau of Information Technology (IT) manages the department's property assets. Some examples are desks, computers and vehicles. This division has the responsibility of auditing every property item assigned to the department statewide. On its recently completed property audit, the department received its eighth consecutive "perfect" audit.

IT Director Regina Patterson said, "We are very proud of this division and the great job that they do in maintaining control of the department's assets."

Guy Woodall is the director of Service Operations, Kent "Oley" Olesen is the inventory control manager who is assisted by William Hurst, Andra Jackson, John McVay and Genevieve Moore. When Woodall began working with the department 13 years ago, audits were done on paper. About 9 years ago, IT developed an inventory tracking electronic management system (I.T.E.M.S.) to help track assets.

Unit property managers also perform self-audits and the Logistics team makes regular surplus property pickups of inventory. The following table shows the quantities of items and work done:

Logistics Facts	2018 Quantities
Equipment Inventory Items	19,545
Equipment Inventory Value	\$41,851,700.20
Forms Managed	1,300
Form Packages Sent	6,563
Promotional Items Managed	400
Department Vehicles	55
Emergency Response Vehicles, Trailers, etc.	93

An exciting change now underway is switching to the new RFID, the radio frequency identification program, that will automatically record property items within a certain vicinity. This improvement will mean individual items will no longer have to be scanned by bar code. This is a real advantage in that items will no longer have to be shifted or moved and time will be saved in locating property numbers.



Logistics team members pictured, left to right, are William Hurst, Guy Woodall, Genevieve Moore, Andra Jackson, Kent "Oley" Olesen and John McVay.

Public Health Steps Up Following Deadly Tornado

Alabamians continue to recover from tornadoes that took 23 lives, and members of the Alabama Department of Public Health team in the East Central District and others continue to help the affected communities that include Beauregard and Smiths Station.

State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris wrote, "I greatly appreciate the dedication and selflessness of our staff members."

Lee County Home Health Team Ensure Patients' Well-being

On Sunday afternoon March 3, the day of the catastrophic EF-4 Lee County tornado, Susan Owen was the on-call home health nurse in the East Central District. After she learned the direct hit with winds of about 170 miles per hour was to the area where three of her patients lived, she tried to contact them. Somewhat relieved that she was able to reach two of them by telephone, she failed to reach the third.

James Hardin, home care nurse administrator for the East Central District, said, "Susan is the primary nurse for the patients in this area and is familiar with their locations and needs. Susan attempted to travel by automobile to this patient's house, but the roads were impassable. She attempted to contact the patient throughout the evening and into Monday morning, as well as trying to reach family contacts on the patient's emergency plan."

On Monday morning, the home health team members were still unable to locate the patient by phone and the route to her home remained blocked. Fortunately, Dorian Parker, LPN, who also had visited this patient, knew of an alternate route to the patient's residence. She was able to verify that the patient survived the storm, but there were power lines and poles lying across her driveway. A family member's trailer was destroyed in front of the patient's, and another trailer and a workshop were destroyed beside her trailer. Fortunately, the patient's trailer was spared. Although the patient had no power and was shaken, she was otherwise unharmed and had family members present with her.

The team continued to check on their patients. Hardin explained, "Later Monday morning, after contacting shelters and with the threat of freezing temperatures that evening, Dorian and I went back to the patient's residence to persuade her to move to a shelter. When we arrived, the conditions were still poor. Family members were sifting through debris, the driveway was still covered with downed power lines, and the temperature

was beginning to drop. Due to the lack of power, the patient agreed to go to a shelter that evening and we confirmed that she had transportation with family."

Hardin returned to the patient's residence on Tuesday to follow up on her, and was informed by her son that she had gone to stay in one of the motel shelters with her daughter. Power was restored, so the patient was expected to be returning home.

The tornado's path came through a pine forest directly across the street from the patient's home. Hardin compared the way the trees were snapped off "to a vacuum cleaner as it crossed over to the patient's property."

"We will continue to follow up with the patient and her needs," Hardin said. The patient received food items and home goods lost in the storm. "We will provide care for the duration of her recovery and after."

"We are proud of all of them and appreciate their compassion and caring," Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mary McIntyre said in urging the home health professionals to stay safe while they worked under difficult circumstances. "This is awesome and shows how our staff will (and often do) go the extra mile--not even tornadoes, downed power lines, or blocked roads keep our staff from doing their jobs!"

SMORT Responsibilities

Tim Hatch, deputy director of the Center for Emergency Preparedness, was also called into action following the deadly tornado. Working in concert with the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, he, CEP employee Rick Thomas, and volunteers deployed portable mortuary units to the scene as members of the State Mortuary Operations Response Team (SMORT).

In carrying out this solemn task, it was particularly disturbing when they were asked to supply additional body bags because officials had exhausted their supply and needed bags for children and adolescents as well as adults. They worked with partner agencies to identify and document decedents.

Employees Staff Volunteer Centers

On the weekends, public health staffed two volunteer reception centers (VRCs), one at a school and one at a church. VRCs are locations where volunteers register and are given assignments, and nurses administer Tdap shots and basic first aid to the volunteers. During

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Tornado, continued from page 4

the week, injured volunteers went to county health departments in Lee and Russell counties to receive services. All told, there were more than 100 non-profits represented in the volunteer workforce.

Ensuring the cold chain of transportation of vaccine, keeping vaccine within the temperature range, is also vital. Nakema Moss and Lisa D. Jones transported the vaccine safely.

The DRC (Disaster Recovery Center) was established to assist victims with their Federal Emergency Management Agency claims. ADPH staffed the two DRCs with ADPH staff including social workers who provided information. This information about public health services included WIC, vital records and assistance for persons needing medications.

ADPH employees staffed two volunteer reception centers on the weekends. These are some photos of the teams.



Susan Douglass, Lisa Jones and Mary Conway



Carol Wilson and Jennifer Smith



Standing: Ka'Laun Hambrite, Lisa Fitch, Cashandra Fluellen. Sitting: Mary Conway, Susan Douglass



Standing: Rebecca Johns, Kimberly Edwards, Misti Denmark. Sitting: Angelika Windham, Rebecca Johnson, Carol Wilson

These are photographs of some of the volunteers:

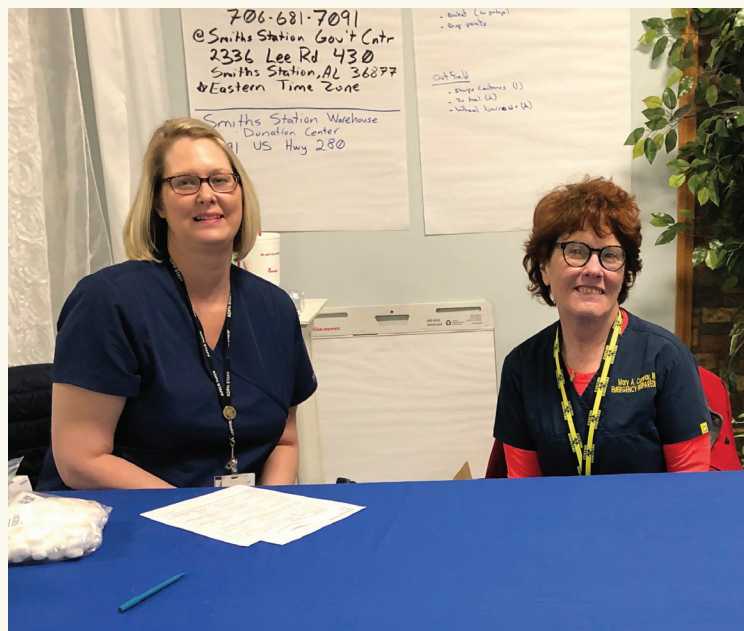


Patti Stadlberger and Lisa D. Jones

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Tammy Demus, Shawanda Surles and Justin Foster



Wendy Pritchard and Mary Conway



James Hardin and Johnny Burell



William Kennedy speaks with Halcyon Elementary students.

Other volunteers not pictured include Fred Coley, Stephen Daniel, Belinda Graham, June Grier, Connie King, April Lampley, Adriane Lawrence Beth Ransom-Wells, Tim Reynolds, Jenee Richardson, Jackie Strickland and Judy Wasson.

Environmental Health Needs Addressed

As with all disasters, the news media were informed about injury prevention, food and water safety, and stray animals. Septic tanks were severely damaged, pulled out of the ground, or completely missing in the Beauregard and Smiths Station communities. Lee County environmentalists verified sites where septic tanks have been damaged or are completely gone. Site visits were conducted by the local Alabama Onsite

Wastewater Association representative, Marcus Geiger, who is working with Matthew Conner, acting district environmental director for the East Central District.

Children Concerned

State Social Work Director William Kennedy, who also works with the Center for Emergency Preparedness, spoke to the Quest students at Pintlala Elementary and Halcyon Elementary Schools in Montgomery County about emergency preparedness. He was invited to speak to the classes after many of the students had questions and concerns following the storms of March 3. Kennedy read *Just a Big Storm* by Mercer Mayer and shared with the students the ways they can prepare for storms and other emergencies.

CLAIMS Integration Helps Clear Billing/Reimbursement Backlog

Thanks to the work of the Bureau of Information Technology (IT) and Central Office staff, a backlog of encounters in the department's Electronic Health Record (EHR) were reviewed and keyed through the CLAIMS Integration system.

The Bureau of Information Technology (IT) developed and deployed the system that enabled the department to improve its revenue stream and better manage financial resources for continued business continuity.

Critical modules of CLAIMS Integration were developed in record time to facilitate the gathering of data from the EHR and allow the department to continue billing and reimbursement operations. At the end of October 2018, the first basic version of CLAIMS Integration software was ready for use. In early November, county health department staff began keying encounters for family planning, immunization for children and adults, DCS, and EPSDT services. The reimbursement results were outstanding and more than tripled the revenue expectations.

Feedback indicated that users were excited with the ease of use, screen design, and the back-end programming that saved the user from having to perform numerous extra keying steps. From the inception of the idea through development and implementation, the department continues to see an increase in billable revenue. IT will continue to work with the department to expand CLAIMS Integration

to ensure billable revenue for services provided is captured, billed and reimbursed.

By the end of February, 28,000 additional encounters were reviewed and keyed.



On January 17, dozens of employees from the RSA Tower who worked to bring EHR billing up to date enjoyed a taco salad bar lunch as they listened to the tunes of Mexican dinner music. Employees in Administration prepared the buffet treat in appreciation for the coding and data entry work done by numerous Central Office staff members over the past few months. Shown, left to right, are State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris, Gloria Brown, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mary McIntyre, Ravi Satya and Jennifer Allen. After the bountiful meal was consumed, leftovers were donated to the Salvation Army.

Sandra Williams Honored for CLAIMS Work



Sandra Williams, left, administrative support assistant with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, was presented the Star Award of the Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support on January 11. Janice Cook, director of the Office of Management Support, presented the quarterly award. Ms. Williams received numerous nominations for volunteering to help with billing extraction and for her great attention with data entry throughout the entire process. State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris stated that he was thankful for the help provided by all staff who have volunteered their time working in the Centralized Billing Unit.

Wall Murals Welcome Children and Families to Franklin County WIC Program

Colorful murals of animals now adorn the walls of the WIC clinic at the Franklin County Health Department thanks to the efforts of administrative support assistant and gifted artist Perla Arce.

Clinic Nurse Supervisor Kim Wooten said the idea came from Northern District Administrator Judy Smith who asked her if she would like to have a mural on the wall, "Of course I said 'yes.' She then asked if I knew anyone who could draw. I told her that I did, that our new clerk was very talented. Even though I had only seen a few drawings that Perla had in a notebook, these drawing were outstanding. I knew she would do a great job."

As someone who has always loved art and took a few classes in high school, Ms. Arce said she enjoyed the opportunity this challenge presented her to entertain the kids. She said, "I wanted to do one wall, and I kept working on others when I had a few minutes. I looked

up some ideas and then drew them freehand over a few months."

Ms. Arce has worked at the Russellville office since May 2018.



Artist Perla Arce

Photo Contest Winners Share Their Smiles With Alabama

To kick off National Children's Dental Health Month, the Oral Health Office announced the winners of its second annual smile photo contest for third grade students in Alabama. A girl and boy's photo submissions were selected as the overall winners of the "Share Your Smile with Alabama" campaign. Brian Escobar of Kitty Stone Elementary School in Jacksonville and Aiyana Velazquez of Arab Elementary School in Arab were selected to be spotlighted in departmental marketing campaigns to promote children's oral health in the state for 2019.



Aiyana Velazquez and Brian Escobar

Lead Certification Branch Recognized

The Alabama Conference of Social Work (ACSW) honored the Lead Certification Branch of the Bureau of Environmental Services at its 2019 annual conference for its sponsorship and support. For the fifth consecutive year, an exhibit at the conference helped educate the more than 460 attendees that included 126 students from colleges and universities throughout Alabama. The award was presented to Daniel Wismulek on behalf of the program at the February conference.

The Indoor Air Quality/Lead Branch protects Alabamians in the following ways:

- Provides information on issues related to indoor air quality, lead-based paint, and other lead hazards.

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Daniel Wismulek, left, and Branch Director Steven McDaniel of the Lead Certification Branch hold the plaque presented by the Alabama Conference of Social Work.

Dr. Karen Landers Helps Combat TB in the Marshall Islands, Reads a Record 238 Films in One Day

For Tuberculosis Control Medical Consultant Dr. Karen Landers, her volunteer deployment to the Marshall Islands last August was one of the most meaningful experiences of her career. She devoted three weeks working long hours daily in the TB+Leprosy Free Majuro Program that promoted screening and education about TB through government channels. The program's goal, in cooperation with the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Marshallese government, is to improve the lives of citizens by eliminating TB from the islands.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is an island country and a United States associated state near the equator in the Pacific Ocean, slightly west of the International Date Line. Geographically, the islands are part of the larger island group of Micronesia. The TB disease rate in the Marshall Islands capital of Majuro is more than 300 per 100,000, among the highest rates in the world.

Selected volunteers were committed to a 3-week deployment cycle over 24 weeks from June through November 2018. Upon return from her assignment halfway around the world, Dr. Landers stated, "The Marshallese people were very gracious and appreciative. It was an honor to work with this country in cooperation with the CDC and WHO."

Program staffing consisted of experienced volunteer clinicians, radiologists, nurses, lab technicians, X-ray technicians, and epidemiologists from other parts of the world. They worked in teams to provide local support including hiring local community health workers.

Noting a photo of a fresh, handmade flower crown. Dr. Landers said, "As a welcome to the country, I had to wear my 'crown' for my first day in clinic. Needless to say, I have never had to wear a headpiece to read films! Maybe that was why I held the record for numbers of films in one day! The male physicians were given flower leis to wear instead of crowns."

There was a well-organized, rigorous and highly efficient routine. Each day at 7:30 or 8 a.m. there was a morning report and the TB suspect cases from the previous few days were presented and discussed for disposition. Volunteer TB clinicians either read chest X-rays, treated latent TB infection (LTBI), or worked in the TB follow-up clinic. Most Marshallese don't speak English, so interpreter services were invaluable.

At a screening, patients checked in and gave a history before being tested for TB and Hansen's disease. If found to have TB, they were screened for diabetes. Pediatric assessments were made for children 5 years old and under. Patients made a return visit two days later. To save time, the nurse reported significant information as Dr. Landers read the film. Dr. Landers read hundreds of TB films each day. In fact, she read a record 238 films in a single day. Then the nurse or interpreter advised the patient of findings and disposition.

As of September 21, 2018, preliminary project data were very encouraging, with the following results:

- Majuro's population is 27,275, and 20,544 people were screened by interview.
- Eighty-six percent came to screening sites for a second visit to complete reading of TST and have a chest X-ray.
- Detected 261 cases of new TB disease.
- Started LTBI treatment for 4,197 people.
- Detected 49 cases of Hansen's disease.
- Detected 380 new cases of diabetes.

The goal of TB elimination in the Marshall Islands is ambitious, but the results indicate how cooperative the Marshallese people were and how effective the professionals were in their efforts to accomplish their goal of TB elimination.

Dr. Karen Landers serves as both medical officer for the Northern and Northeastern districts and the department's TB Control medical consultant.



Dr. Landers worked in the Radiology Suite.

New Lab Construction On Schedule

The move-in date for the new Bureau of Clinical Laboratories in Prattville remains approximately one year from now.

Victor Hunt, director of the Office of Facilities Management, reported that the lab's roof, metal studs, outside walls, hanging ducts, sprinkler pipes and electrical conducts have been installed for the



Seyth Snell, facilities director for the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories, and Dr. Sharon Massingale, bureau director, survey progress on the new lab facility.



This is a street view of the laboratory.

laboratory. Contractors are almost at the point of adding insulation and drywall.

Construction of the adjacent training facility will follow, and it will be opened at around the same time. Plans are for the Center for Emergency Preparedness, the Office of Emergency Medical Services, and the Office of Radiation Control to relocate their operations to the new facility.



Bricks are being laid at the back of the building.



This is a side view.

Teresa Fair to Participate in National Minority Leadership Program

Teresa Fair, assistant director of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, has been accepted to participate in the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors 2019 Minority Leadership Program. The program seeks to help public health professionals of color to visualize and own their leadership roles in ending health inequities.

Participating in this program will require Ms. Fair to complete two weeks of in-person training that focus on honing and developing both "hard and soft" skills that will assist her in her public health career, and she is excited about this opportunity. Out-of-state training events will be held in April and July.

A letter of acceptance to the program read, "We received a large number of applications from many terrific candidates which, with only a limited number of individuals that could be accepted, made the decisions challenging. We are confident that your current role and experience makes you an ideal candidate for the 2019 MLP cohort."



Statewide Awards Presented to Public Health Social Workers

Mitzi Bragwell of the Morgan County Health Department was selected as Public Health Social Worker of the Year for 2019. Awarded the honor of Social Work Manager of the Year was Patience Enyinda of the Limestone County Health Department. The two recipients were recognized March 20 at the 2019 Northern District Social Work Training held in Decatur, Ala., during National Social Work Month.

Nominators for the Public Health Social Worker of the Year award said Ms. Bragwell is a “humble and dedicated” social worker “with a very big heart.” She is described as a “super hero” to her clients with “multiple super powers.” Ms. Bragwell serves on various committees in her community including the Interagency Committee and the substance abuse advisory committee with the North Central Alabama Mental Health Center. Last Christmas she spearheaded a program to provide blankets and gifts to elderly residents in the community with no family. Ms.

Bragwell is active in her church where she teaches and serves in the nursery.

Ms. Enyinda was commended for being “caring, compassionate, thorough and committed to the mission of public health.” She serves on several committees in her community including the Interagency Committee of Limestone County and the Alabama Health Care Social Work Association in Madison County. She coordinated the Medical Needs Tent for the Convoy of Hope in Limestone County where over 2,000 people were served. Ms. Enyinda is active with her church where she ministers to women and children and assisted with the facilitation of women’s conferences.

Public health social workers provide intervention services to help clients discover ways of meeting their needs and preventing future problems. Clients they serve may be children, families, elderly persons, and persons with functional and access needs.



Pictured, left to right, are Judy Smith, Northern District administrator; Mitzi Bragwell, Public Health Social Worker of the Year; Terrina Harris, Northern District Social Work director; and Bill Kennedy, State Social Work director.



Judy Smith, Northern District administrator; Patience Enyinda, Public Health Social Work Manager of the Year; Terrina Harris, Northern District Social Work director; and Bill Kennedy, State Social Work director.

Alabama Dietetics Association Recognizes Lita Chatham



Congratulations to Lita Chatham, MS, RDN, LD, Center, who was presented the 2018 Emerging Dietetic Leader Award recipient by the Alabama Dietetics Association. This award recognizes the competence and activities of dietitians regardless of their age, who have made distinctive contributions early in their dietetics careers. She is employed with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support. She is shown with President-Elect, Sheena Quizon Gregg (left), and President Cacyce Davis (right).

Commendations

If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee's supervisor and a copy by e-mail to Arrol.Sheehan@adph.state.al.us for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee's name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

Chasity Brewster

St. Clair County Health Department
from Frederick L. Hardy, Sr.
St. Clair County, Ala.

Susie Carroll

Alice Hadaway
Eliesabeth Lindsey
Health Provider Standards
from Sherry Ginn
Phenix City, Ala.

Saundra Gray

Center for Health Statistics
from Meagan Calvert
Homewood, Ala.

Julie Hare

Prevention, Promotion, and Support
from Phyllis Fritchen
Fairhope, Ala.

Casandra Henderson

Center for Health Statistics
from Linda Davis
Centre, Ala.

Evelyn Jackson

Center for Health Statistics
from MaryAnn Duke
St. Mary's, Ga.
Caroline Stalvey
Lecanto, Fla.

Georgia Reynolds

Center for Health Statistics
from MaryAnn Duke
St. Mary's, Ga.
Rhonda McCartney
Acworth, Ga.

Shayla Santiago

Center for Health Statistics
from Kari Adams
Dora, Ala.
Delores Boyd
Montgomery, Ala.
Betsy Corrie
Guntersville, Ala.
Tammy Gullede
Northport, Ala.

Patti Stadlberger, R.N., B.S.N.

Carol Wilson, R.N.
East Central District
from Nakema S. Moss, M.P.A.
Montgomery, Ala.

Debra Starks

Center for Health Statistics
from Barbara Roberts
Montgomery, Ala.

Janelle Varner

Center for Health Statistics
from Daisy Hill
Hialeah, Fla.

Suretta Davis Wins Star Award



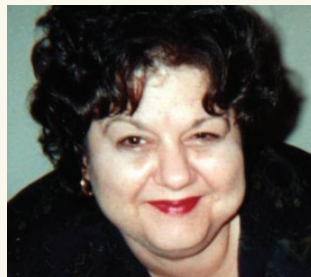
Suretta Davis, accountant and grants contract manager with the Center for Emergency Preparedness, was selected as quarterly Star Award recipient of the Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support. Twelve years ago she was employed as an administrative support assistant, and she has gone on to earn a master's degree in accounting. Mrs. Davis was recognized by her supervisor and others for her ability to assess and improve systems. She is shown with Jamey Durham, bureau director.

Lead, continued from page 8

- Enforces the state regulations that require individuals and firms that engage in lead-based paint activity of pre-1978 housing and child-occupied facilities to be trained and certified to perform these activities according to established safe work practice standards.
- Provides support for the Alabama Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.
- Works directly with case managers and social workers for children diagnosed with elevated lead blood levels.

In Memoriam - Karen Rogers

Karen Rogers, accountant in the Office of Financial Services, passed away October 28, 2018, following a brief illness. She was known for her compassion, and was often sought out by others when they needed a kind word or encouragement. Everyone who knew her admired her for her strength, facing everyday with courage in spite of her physical limitations. Her quick wit and humor were legendary and her good-natured roasts of employees who retired or transferred were often a highlight of a work event. She dreamed of beginning new enterprises after her planned retirement in December 2018, believing that with God nothing is impossible.



Retirees

The following departmental employees have retired recently:

November

Thomas Hicks

Northeastern District - TB

Mary Holmes

Southwestern District

December

Tracey Holladay

West Central District

Douglas Turnbull

Southeastern District

January

Ona Jean Abbot

East Central District

Angela Buchanan

West Central District

Denice Clark

Immunization Division

Marcia Clayton

Jefferson District

Rebecca Collier

West Central District

Brenda Conner

West Central District

Patricia Crowder

East Central District

Brenda Cummings

HIV/AIDS Division

Deborah Davis

Family Health Services

Yvonne Davis

Southwestern District

Leigh Ezell

Southwestern District

G.M. Gallaspy

Food, Milk, Lodging

Anita Graydon

CHIP

Bradley Grinstead

Radiation Control

Lula Hudson-Briggs

East Central District

Marcia Ison

East Central District

Karen Johnson

Northeastern District

Vivian Jones

Northern District

Tracy Klein

East Central District

Corinne Langford

Center for Health
Statistics

Felicia Lay

Northern District

Joe Lee

Information Technology

Lana Naylor

Northern District

Lynne Noah

Southwestern District

Ellen Peeples

Southwestern District

Susan Powell

Information Technology

Joan Styres

Center for Health
Statistics

Martha Williams

Northern District

February

Rachel Brannock

Northeastern District

Jennifer Dove

West Central District

Sharon Hall

West Central District

Elsie Jones

CHIP

Rebecca Moten

East Central District

Paul Piepho

Southwestern District
STD

Terry Voss

Northern District

Sharon Wientjes

Prevention, Promotion,
and Support

March

Donna Dubois

Northern District

Julie Hare

Prevention, Promotion,
and Support

Ramona Hawkins

Northern District

Janice Johnson

Jefferson District

Donna Richardson

West Central District TB

Lola Skinner

Northern District

Laurie Stout

Field Operations

Carolyn Turner

Immunization Division



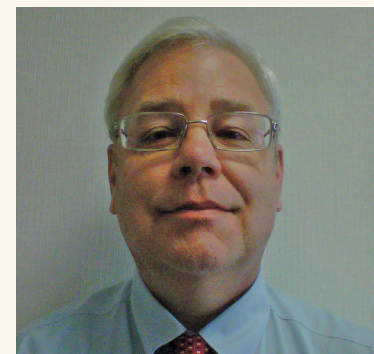
Colleagues at the Montgomery County Health Department honored Ona Jean Abbott upon her retirement with 28 years of service. She is shown with State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris.



Viki Brant retired from the Bureau of Children's Health Insurance after more than 31 years of service. She is shown with State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris at a reception given by her coworkers.



Patty Leonard retired from the Northeastern District effective February 1 with more than 25 years of service.



Doug Turnbull retired from the Southeastern District effective December 1 after more than 28 years of service.

Got Sugar? Telehealth Class Helps Diabetics Manage Care

By Christopher Smith, Andalusia Star News

Several students who attended the Got Sugar? Free diabetes class at the Covington County Health Department said that the information they've learned about diabetes has changed their lives.

The Alabama Health Action Coalition (ALHAC) partnered with the health department to do a study on the benefits of Telehealth. The six-week class taught lessons on diabetes and its risks, healthy eating, exercise, talking with a health care team, and managing medications.

"As of 2018, Alabama ranks 49th in the nation for people with diabetes," Shaina Berry from ALHAC said. "So it is one of our big health concerns for Alabama. At the health action coalition, we take on projects to drive the health rankings of Alabama upward and we are really passionate that we have to focus on diabetes because so many of our citizens are facing that."

Berry said that ALHAC is partnering with different health departments in the state to help provide education on diabetes.

A lot of people in rural parts of Alabama don't have access to diabetes education," Berry said. "We have a grant to hopefully prove that people are getting more educated by using Telehealth. Hopefully by using Telehealth we are giving people opportunities for education that they wouldn't otherwise have."

Jessica Fountain, a certified diabetes instructor, teaches the classes from her home and the students in Covington County watch her through a computer screen at the Covington County Health Department.

"We are able to do this through the grant that we have," Berry said. "The health department already had the equipment, so we teach healthcare virtually. Jessica can be set up at her home in Brewton and be able to broadcast to multiple sites."

Cassandra Jones said that she has been a diabetic for 40 years and never been to a class. Now she said that she is seeing improvement after taking this course.

"I have always heard what I'm supposed to do by watching TV or having somebody tell me what to do," Jones said. "But by actually being in this class, I have actually dropped weight and have been able to manage my diabetes a lot better than how I was. Even though I thought I was doing well, this class has given



Front Row: Lula Womack, Bessie Marshall, Louise Shakespeare, Diane High, Bertha Goldsmith. Middle Row: Charleta Davis, Dorothy Stallworth, Thelma Scott, Ortilda Salter, Wanda Wytch, Renee Smith, Rosemarie Mills, Shuniya Anderson, Terri Marshall, Heather Murphy. Back Row: Janice Shakespear, Marian Dorman, Jackie Kinsaul, Katie Johnson, Larry Blackman, Terri Bryan, Falisa Lacey, Johnny Marvin, Michael W. Williams. Two others not pictured.

me much more information than I knew and it has definitely made it better."

Bessie Marshall said that she is better at managing her medication after taking the course.

"I am now handling the way I take my medicine a lot better," Marshall said. "This class helps me a whole lot in that perspective. I am taking it the correct way now after learning the information in this class. I would recommend anybody to take this class."

Cindy Bass found out about the class right after she was diagnosed with diabetes, a week before the first class.

"I am really glad that I came," Bass said. "I just completely thought that diabetes was totally different. I thought that diabetes was for old people or fat people; I didn't know that anybody could get diabetes. This class has just taught me so much."

Marian Dorman said that the class is her support group for her diabetes.

"In Covington County, there is no support group for diabetes, nothing to turn to," Dorman said. "This class has helped me because it is like a support place. It is educational, and you can't get enough education when it comes to diabetes. Here I feel like everyone is sharing the same thing and we can share the pros and cons of being a diabetic."

Susan Gantt who directs the St. Vincent DePaul outreach at Christ the King Catholic Church, doesn't have diabetes, but found the course helpful for the people that she encounters every day.

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Environmental Services Q and A

The following questions were submitted from the public to our website, and were answered by staff members of the Bureau of Environmental Services.

INQUIRY: I was told by a restaurant manager that their "no outside food" policy is mandated by the Alabama Department of Public Health. Is this true?

RESPONSE: It is not a requirement/law that no outside food be brought into restaurants in Alabama. It is up to the individual food establishments/restaurants to mandate that for themselves.

INQUIRY: Are hand sanitizers required for people preparing food?

RESPONSE: The Food Code, the rules that apply to food service establishments, does not require the use of hand sanitizers. The Food Code does require handwashing sinks to be supplied with hot and cold water, soap and hand drying devices.

INQUIRY: Am I allowed to make barbecue sauce at home and offer it for sale?

RESPONSE: Barbecue sauce is not a food item allowed to be prepared and sold from a private home under the Cottage Food Law. To make and sell barbecue sauce you would need to operate from a permitted facility, and private homes are not permitted. There is a resource for food entrepreneurs who do not have a permitted food facility. It is called the Innovation Center. The Innovation Center is run by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

Sugar, continued from page 14

"I had no idea I would learn so much," Gantt said. "Anybody who is in this area who is diagnosed with diabetes would benefit from this program. I myself feel like I would be a healthier person just from coming to the class. Diabetes is on the list of a lot of people that we serve with St. Vincent DePaul and I can't wait to tell them about this. I think this could change their lives."

Six of the students in the class "graduated" from the course and received certificates.

The class is free of charge.

UPDATE FROM ANDALUSIA STAR NEWS

February 21, 2019, was the end of another six-week diabetes class hosted by the Covington County Health Department and the Alabama Health Action Coalition (ALHAC). There were a phenomenal 26 graduates from the program!

During the program, the participants were able to benefit from in-person diabetes education with a Certified Diabetes Educator as well as education via a Telehealth platform. The six-week class was able to include lessons on diabetes and its risks, healthy eating, exercise, talking with your healthcare team, managing your medications and the emotional aspect of diabetes.

"We were also blessed to have a guest speaker, Pharmacist Laura Darby, congratulate the participants in their success and answer medication-related questions. Overall, numerous participants experienced a decrease in their hemoglobin A1C, their blood pressure, their waist circumference and/or their weight. The class was absolutely a success and a wonderful benefit for the participants in Covington County!"

National Rural Health Day Proclaimed



Gov. Kay Ivey proclaimed November 15, 2018, as National Rural Health Day in Alabama and encouraged citizens to recognize the valuable services of rural health practitioners. Shown, left to right, with the governor are Ryan Kelly, Administrator, Alabama Rural Health Association; Farrell Turner, President, Alabama Rural Health Association; Celeste Drayden, Alabama Primary Healthcare Association; State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris; Michael A. Smith, Program Administrator, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health (OPCRH); Chuck Lail, Director, OPCRH; Niko Phillips, Program Administrator, OPCRH; Gloria Brown, Administrative Assistant, OPCRH; and Jane Knight, Alabama Hospital Association.

Johnston Inducted Posthumously into Alabama Vector Management Society

The Alabama Vector Management Society has inducted Dr. Bill Johnston posthumously as an honorary member of the society.

Dr. Johnston served as State Public Health Veterinarian from 1993 until 2003. At the time of his death, he was the immediate past president of the Alabama Veterinary Medical Association and the president of the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians. He was a member of a team of national leaders working to control raccoon rabies with oral rabies vaccination.

Kelly Stevens, director of the Infectious Diseases and Outbreaks Division, Bureau of Communicable Disease, noted that Dr. Johnston was very involved in the society, especially around the time that West Nile virus emerged. Colleagues praised him for "his courage, humor and support for those around him," and for being a professional who loved people and cared deeply about his community and state.

Whoville Display A Winner

The Whoville display of the Bureau of Family Health Services was selected winner of the holiday decorating contest in the RSA Tower. Debbie Moulton is pictured with the Grinch, otherwise known as Dr. Tommy Johnson.



State Combined Campaign A Success

Thanks to generous contributions, the Alabama Department of Public Health exceeded its annual campaign goal by contributing \$68,526.16. To help attain this goal, fundraising events were held by the Bureau of Family Health Services which hosted its annual breakfast and potato bake, the Bureau of Children's Health Insurance that offered a grits bar, the Office of Radiation Control which held an indoor yard sale and others.



Heart Health Promoted Statewide

Many county health departments supported Heart Health Month activities during February that included holding heart walks, preparing bulletin boards, holding potlucks with heart healthy foods, sponsoring blood pressure checks, and encouraging everyone to be heart smart.



National Health Survey Underway in Marengo County

The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), the most comprehensive survey of the health and nutritional status of the U.S. population, is underway in Marengo County through April 20.

All counties in the United States have a chance to be selected for the NHANES, and Marengo County was one of the 15 counties chosen to be part of this initiative in 2019. NHANES provides important data on public health problems from a national perspective. Each year, 5,000 residents across the nation have the chance to participate in the latest NHANES, conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to NCHS Director Jennifer H. Madans, “NHANES serves as the nation’s ‘health check-up,’ by going into communities to collect health information throughout the country. The survey provides a wealth of important data about many of the major health and nutritional issues affecting the country.”

A team of health professionals, nutritionists and health technicians ask respondents to first participate in a health interview in the respondent’s home followed by a health exam in the NHANES mobile examination center. While no medical care is provided directly, a report on physical findings is given to each participant along with an explanation from survey medical staff. All information collected in the survey is kept confidential.

Ricky Elliott, director of Field Operations, praised District Administrator Chad Kent and Assistant District Administrator Suzanne Terrell for helping prepare for the survey over the past few months by communicating with the health care coalition, mayors of municipalities in the county, and the Marengo County Commission to make them aware of the survey. State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris, Elliott, community and district leaders attended an open house March 12 to visit the impressive mobile examination center that has three mobile units. George Dixon, NHANES study manager, said that people have been very receptive.

Risk factors that may increase the chances of developing a certain disease or condition are being examined. Smoking, alcohol consumption, sexual practices, drug use, physical fitness and activity, weight, and dietary intake will be studied. Data on certain aspects of reproductive health are also being collected.

The diseases, medical conditions, and health indicators being studied include:

- Anemia
- Body composition and bone density
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Diabetes
- Environmental exposures
- Infectious diseases
- Kidney diseases
- Nutrition
- Obesity
- Oral health
- Physical activity and physical functioning
- Reproductive history and sexual behavior
- Respiratory diseases
- Sexually transmitted diseases

The comprehensive data collected by NHANES impacts the everyday lives of the population of all ages, on everything from air quality, to the vaccinations given by doctors, to the low fat and “light” foods now routinely offered in grocery stores.

NHANES has had a prominent role in improving the health of all people living in the U.S. for the past 55 years. Public health officials, legislators and physicians use the information gathered by NHANES to develop sound health policies, direct and design health programs and services, and expand the health knowledge for the nation. In addition, NHANES data are used to produce national references and are used to create standardized growth charts for pediatricians across the country.



Assistant District Administrator Suzanne Terrell is shown receiving a lab test at the NHANES mobile examination center in Marengo County.

BCL Celebrates Pi Day, Donations Assist Tornado Survivors

For the fifth year, mathematically inclined Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL) employees celebrated Pi Day to share corny math jokes and enjoy both homemade and store-bought pies. Pi Day is an annual celebration of the mathematical constant π . Pi Day is observed on March 14 since 3, 1, and 4 are the first three significant digits of π .

Plans changed from the time the annual celebration was announced in mid-February after the EF-4 tornado devastated several small communities in Lee County on March 3. The United Way of Central Alabama launched a fundraising drive to collect monetary donations, so organizers announced that the theme this year would be a fundraiser titled "Pie in the Face for Charity." Proceeds from the enormously successful event resulted in a \$600 donation to help the affected families.



Employees could opt to wear protective gear and were "pied" with paper plates covered with loads of whipped cream. Sarah Hardinger and Sandra Lubale "pie" Ali Martin.



Once again this year, judges used an objective scoring system to rate the pies' attributes. Judges, left to right, were Allison Hatchett, Dr. Dee Jones and Dr. Burnestine Taylor. In addition to bragging rights, winners were awarded certificates and a trophy for the best pie.



BCL Director Dr. Sharon Massingale generously volunteered herself to be "pied" for a minimum \$10 per person donation, and Ashley Megelin, the event organizer, obliged. Dr. Massingale amassed the largest number of donations, so she was "pied" with a true pie-crust and filling.



Employees placed their donations in charity jars for each person who agreed to be "pied."



Homemade pie contest award winners pictured, left to right, are John Black, second place, for his "Don't Judge a Pie By Its Crust" entry; Ashley Megelin for her first place caramel apple lattice pie and her third place chocolate chess pie; and Pam Pruett, fourth place, for her "Global Warming Ice Cream Pie."

Calendar of Events

April 10 • 10:30 a.m. - 12 noon

**Ending the Silence, It's Not Too L.A.T.E. –
Listen, Act, Think, Educate**

This program will provide shelter and resource information on domestic and sexual violence. Program faculty will be representing the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Alabama Coalition Against Rape. For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.

April 16 • 10 - 10:30 a.m.

Scale Back Alabama 2019 Final Event

Scale Back Alabama is a free statewide weight-loss campaign designed to encourage Alabamians to get healthy and to have fun while doing it. This will be the final event for the 2019 Scale Back Alabama activities, where winners will be announced at the cash prize drawing. For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.

April 17 • 10 - 11:30 a.m.

**Patient Services: Focusing on Equity and
Inclusion So Everyone Wins!**

This program will enhance participants' understanding of culture, cultural competency, disability, and people first language. Program faculty will discuss the importance of cultural sensitivity in providing appropriate and effective patient care. For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.

April 23 • 1 - 2 p.m.

**How MI Am I? Working with Clients Across the
Spectrum of Volunteerism**

This program will provide a brief introduction to Motivational Interviewing and will introduce the four processes of MI with particular focus on engagement and accurate empathy. For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.

May 3 • 12 noon - 1 p.m.

Chemical Warfare Primer

For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.

May 7 • 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Ethics and Opioid Use

For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.

June 6 • 3 - 3:30 p.m.

ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting

Alabama State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris will address department employees regarding critical issues. For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.

June 13 • 12 noon - 1 p.m.

**Children's Environmental Health:
More Than Smoke and Mold**

The World Health Organization estimates that more than 1 in 4 child deaths could be prevented by cleaning up the environment. Viewers will learn how to offer evidence-based, practical advice to families, schools, and communities to promote a healthy environment. For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.