

Alabama's health

A publication of the Alabama Department of Public Health

Deployment Finds Alabama Emergency Preparedness Teams 'Crucial' In Ice Storm Recovery

When the call came on Jan. 30 around noon, Alabama emergency preparedness teams immediately sprung into action as they loaded their gear to leave by 6 the following morning, preparing to spend up to a week staffing shelters in several locations in Kentucky.

What some called the most severe ice storm and worst disaster in the state's history left more than 70,000 families, two-thirds of Kentucky's population, without power for varying periods of time; some went weeks. As a result of the killer storm roadways were hazardous and there was widespread structural damage.

For the initial phase three Alabama teams were deployed, so they packed their warmest clothing, sleeping bags, plenty of MREs (meals ready to eat) and drinking water. Some of the teams converged in Tennessee before splitting up to go where they were needed, usually not to their originally intended destinations.

Ricky Elliott, assistant area administrator in Public Health Area 9, described his experience in Beaver Dam, Ky., as "life changing" and compared it to mission work. He said, "It was some of the hardest public health work I've done, but some of the most rewarding. I was overwhelmed with the gratitude the people showed us."



Area 2 team members shown are (standing left to right) Karen Butler, Jessica Smith, Sondra Nassetta, Teresa Moore, and Pam Galbeath (kneeling) Stacy Methvin and Rebecca Gibson.

Teams from Logistics and the Center for Emergency Preparedness were dispatched to deliver vans and equipment. John Heitman, director of Information Technology, Gene Hill and Roy Case's group took care of arranging for the vans, loading supplies, and driving them to central locations.

Elliott drove a 16-passenger van from Montgomery to Beaver Dam. Social Work Manager Suzanne Terrell of the Clarke County Health

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ADPH Dietitians Offer Their Advice on Eating Right

Registered dietitians advised to celebrate National Nutrition Month during March by eating right. Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight can contribute to your overall health and well-being.

“Eating right doesn’t have to be complicated,” said registered, licensed dietitian Miriam Gaines, Director of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division.

For help with a healthy lifestyle plan, talk with the expert, a registered dietitian (RD). As the nation’s food and nutrition experts, registered dietitians are committed to improving the health of their patients and community.

The Alabama Department of Public Health recommended the following tips to help make healthy changes become part of your lifestyle during and after National Nutrition Month, March 2009:

Make a plan: Adopt a few specific small changes. “Making small, realistic changes won’t seem as overwhelming and will be easier to maintain. For example, adding a piece of fruit each day to your diet is simple and will add important nutrients to your diet,” said Teresa Fair, RD, LD, from the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division.

Focus on your food: Plan out your meals and snacks to avoid making quick decisions that lead to eating unhealthy foods because of convenience. Writing a menu will help you with grocery shopping. “If you follow a planned menu it will help reduce eating out which can help lower the amount of calories you eat while saving money too,” said Ms. Gaines.

Make calories count: The majority of your food choices should be packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients. Don’t waste calories by eating foods that provide very little nutrition like sugary beverages, fried foods and candy.

Increase physical activity: Regular physical activity is important for overall health and fitness. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults be physically active for about an hour a day.

Play it safe: Always clean hands and food-contact surfaces, keep raw and cooked foods separate, cook foods to a proper temperature, and always chill leftovers promptly to avoid illness.

Be aware of special needs: Nutritional needs change depending upon your age and overall health. Linda Jennings, MS, RD, LD, works with senior citizen programs. “As we age, fewer calories are needed which makes selecting nutritious foods even more important,” said Ms. Jennings. Check with a registered dietitian to find out what your specific nutritional needs are.

The American Dietetic Association proudly honors registered dietitians each year during March to commemorate the dedication of registered dietitians as advocates for advancing the nutritional status of Americans and people around the world.

The Alabama Department of Public Health employs registered dietitians in a variety of positions throughout the department.

In Alabama, registered dietitians must also be licensed by the state. This protects the public from receiving improper nutrition advice from unqualified individuals. Visit www.boed.alabama.gov to learn more.

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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National Children's Dental Health Month Program Educates Parents About Dental Care

Dental decay remains one of the most infectious and preventable diseases of our time. One of the most vulnerable groups to this devastating disease is our children. Without proper dental care, children live with pain, difficulty eating, problems concentrating in school, and self-esteem issues that begin to affect their life at an early age.

Dental problems have also been linked to other medical problems including heart disease and premature births. According to Medicaid dental utilization rates for 2006, the number of children on Medicaid compared to those who received dental care revealed that only one-third of Medicaid recipients received dental care in Alabama. Even though we know that prevention is the key, what can we do to protect our most valuable resource, our children? One of the most important things a parent can do is to make sure his or her child receives regular dental care. The American Dental Association recommends that children receive a dental exam by age 1 year. However, if not by 1 year, make sure that the child sees a dentist as soon as possible.

Regular dental appointments for professional cleanings and oral exams are important to make sure that preventive efforts are producing good dental health results. Brush your child's teeth with American Dental Association-approved toothpaste twice daily and replace toothbrushes every three or four months or sooner if the bristles become worn.

Cleaning with floss everyday is also very important to remove decay-causing bacteria between teeth where the toothbrush bristles cannot reach. Making sure that children eat a well-balanced diet, limit between meal snacks and avoid sugar-loaded drinks/foods to prevent dental decay and maintain good dental health. Parents have a responsibility to help our children excel in life academically and be the best they can be. We have to start by making sure that they maintain the best health possible. Teaching children good dental health habits at an early age will lead to good overall health that can last a lifetime!

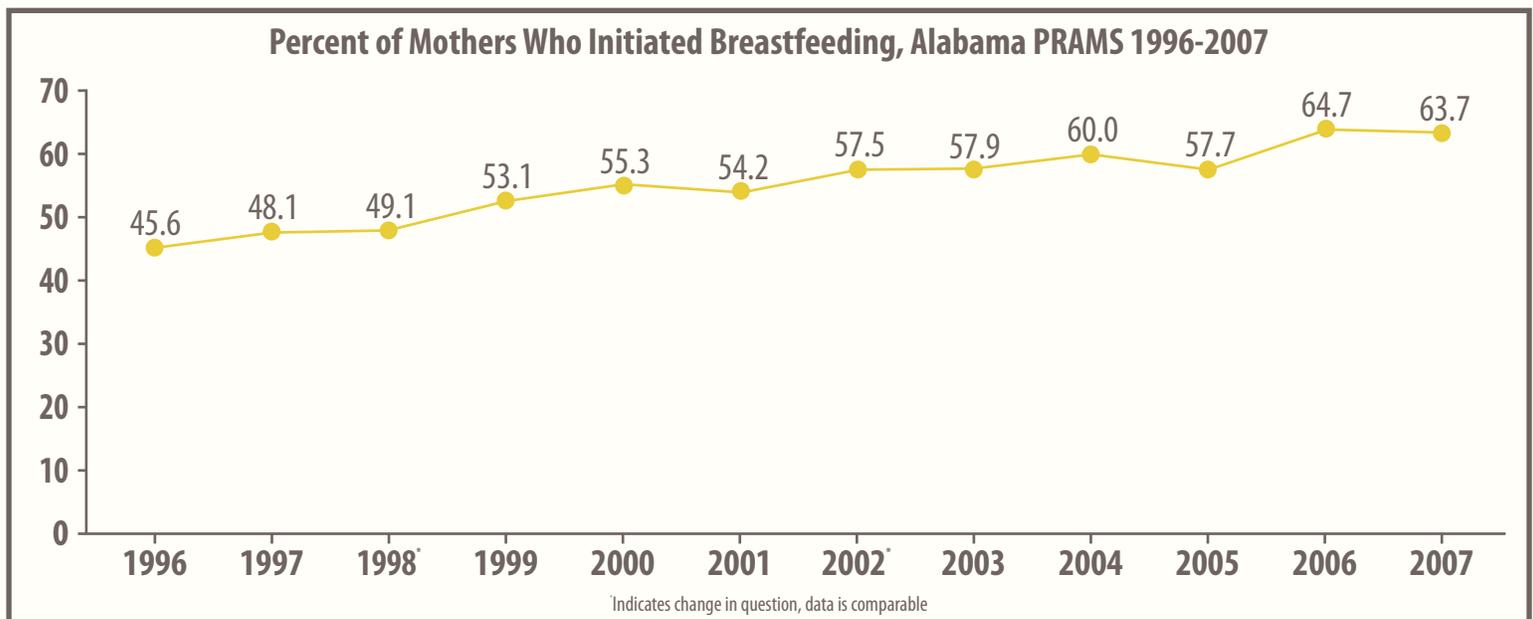
By Gerrie McMillian, MSN, RN



Activities were conducted at the Monroeville Head Start Center during February, National Children's Dental Health Month. In addition to dental screenings, puppets were used to educate about proper brushing and flossing. Students were provided with goody bags that included tooth pencils, dental floss, toothpaste and toothbrushes in addition to parental information. This project was provided by the Oral Health Division, Gerrie McMillian, RN; and ALL Kids Representative, Jamie Manning, RN. Toothbrushes were donated by Gearhart Family Dentistry.

Increasing Number of Alabama Mothers Initiate Breastfeeding

From 1995-2006, the percentage of Alabama mothers who initiated breastfeeding increased nine out of the 11 years. This was a statistically significant 48 percent increase.



Washington County Home Care Ranked Among Top 25 Percent in U.S.

Washington County Home Care, which provides care in Washington and Clarke counties, has been named to the 2008 HomeCare Elite, a compilation of the most successful Medicare-certified home health care providers in the U.S. This annual review identifies the top 25 percent of agencies, ranked by an analysis of performance measures in quality outcomes, quality improvement and financial performance.

The 2008 HomeCare Elite also indicates those providers who are included in the Top 100 and Top 500 of providers nationwide. The data used for this analysis was compiled from publicly available information.

"The 2008 HomeCare Elite winners exemplify a commitment to

providing their patients with optimum care while performing at the highest level," said Nancy Butler, Senior Director of Marketing Communications at OCS, Inc. "We congratulate Washington County Home Care on being one of the top home care agencies in the country."

Brenda Beech, R.N. and Home Care Supervisor for Washington County Home Care, credits dedicated employees and a commitment to service the public with the company's ability to rank as one of the HomeCare Elite. She said, "Our employees have wanted diligently to improve our patients' outcomes, resulting in a better quality of life for them." The 2008 HomeCare Elite is the only performance recognition of its kind in the home health industry.



Washington County Home Care employees are shown: Front row, left to right, Lonia Johnson, Mary Mitchell, Brenda Beech, Mary Jackie Jones; back row, Deborah Leigh Hooks, Shannon Mitchell, Kim Coaker, Kelly Gunter, Melissa Moss. Not shown is Suzanne Tate.



Clarke County Home Health employees are shown, left to right, Linda Powell, Jackie Nixon, Ella Mason, Barbara Hosea.

TEAM Academy - January



Julie Andrews, Dana Battle, Carolyn Bern, John Blackmon, Tammy Burnette, Lem Burell, Rhonda Cofield, Rosie Cunningham, Lacey Ellison, Carl Evans, Phyllis Gilchrist, Cindy Goocher, Sal Gray, Tracey Holladay, John Hooper, Angela House, Ross Hudson, Ann Johnston, Randy Jones, Debbie Knight, Choona Lang, Thomas Lee, Donna Little, Sharon Massingale, Sandra McCool, Steve Mitchell, Chris Palmer, Teresa Porter, Sondra Reese, Beth Romo, Neil Sass, Shannon Searcy, Julia Sosa, Robbie Stubbs, Cindy Templeton, Marcia Thomas, Reva Weddington, Donna Williams.

Retirees

January

Linda McGarrh
Public Health Area III

February

Susan Beauchamp

Dale County Health Department

Martha Duke

Bureau of Clinical Laboratories

Betty Moore

Morgan County Health Department

Mary Riddle

Marshall County Health Department

Alma Throneberry

Morgan County Health Department

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Department was a member of the same team sent to a community shelter at Southern Elementary School which welcomed both people with medical needs and the general population. When they arrived after their long journey, between 300 and 350 people were sheltered there, along with a contingent from the National Guard. The temperature was just 0 degrees for a couple of nights and one day the high was only 9 degrees F.

“We were never in that type of situation before,” Ms. Terrell said. “We made it clear to the others that we were there to assist them and not to take charge. There was great community support and involvement, but they were glad to have us there.”

The medical needs were great, Elliott said, with 46 people in the medical needs section. The majority of the patients were on oxygen concentrators and needed a high level of nursing care, somewhat like patients in a nursing home.

“Our nurses worked so hard,” he said. “They went 24 to 36 hours without any rest, and provided outstanding care. They smiled, had a positive attitude and encouraged the people.”

Area Nursing Director Debbie Thomasson commented, “It was an experience that called for us to utilize every public health skill to meet the diverse medical and social needs of the mass shelter and the MNS. Our group worked as a team with every member doing their best to help shelter residents and community representatives. I am proud to have served with people from Areas 7 and 9 to offer public health to another state at a time of need.”

Ms. Terrell said, “I don’t think they realized power would be out that long. Most of the effort was community run and the churches provided us three meals a day. There were showers available for those with medical needs.”

In responding to hurricanes Ivan and Katrina and the deadly Enterprise tornado, Ms. Terrell had gained experience working in shelters. This was unlike her experiences in the past, however, because there were different referral systems in Kentucky. As a social worker, she helped by arranging for medical supplies, medications and transitioning people back into safe environments. Sometimes people in the shelter had no caregivers, so they had to handle an emergency guardianship order. On a positive note, some Kentuckians happily found they were eligible for home health and other social services.

Likewise, Elliott’s previous public health experiences proved helpful at the school shelter. His environmental training proved useful in inspecting the shelter, checking the onsite sewage system, and



Members of the Area 6 team pictured are (left to right) Marsha Carr, Pam Moody, Connie Lightsey, Tim Hatch, Miranda Hammonds, Brenda Bridges, Annie Bishop and Elizabeth Mize.

ensuring there was a proper area set up for diaper changes. The food served at the shelter came from the school kitchen’s freezer, and Elliott was able to safely defrost and actually helped cut up more than 50 whole chickens to feed the shelter population. Church workers prepared the meals there.

Ms. Terrell concluded upon their return, “We went on a mission to help others and just wanted to make ADPH proud.”

Paducah Team

The team from Public Health Area 2 became known as “the Alabama angels,” headed by Karen Butler, area nursing director.

The team arrived to an armory existing on auxiliary power and having very limited cell phone service. Upon arrival, the team was informed that there had been a case of chicken pox in the shelter and Kentucky’s Department for Public Health requested the team’s assistance in the investigation, which included interviewing the 350 plus occupants at the armory as well as those who had left. Their shift started at 3 a.m. and they dealt with medical issues ranging from dangerously low blood sugar levels, various infections, chest pains and a case of frostbite. Ultimately, six patients had to be sent to the hospital for further treatment and care. Social Work Manager Stacy Methvin of the Cullman County Health Department was key in helping to obtain supplies for the shelterees including MREs, oxygen concentrators and prescription medications.

Ms. Methvin was the only social worker in the shelter. She laughed that she reverted to “old fashioned social work” in that she basically was armed with just a telephone book and her cell phone. Some National Guard members served as her local resources, basically relating policies to her by informing her about their families’

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personal experiences.

When a man needed crutches, she looked up the number for Easter Seals in the local phone directory and an employee working there later agreed to bring a pair of crutches to the shelter on his way home from work.

Ms. Methvin also worked closely with a local mental health case worker to assist an elderly man who was very worried about his dog's welfare at home. The local case worker took it on herself to go by his house, feed his dog, and report back that the dog was fine. When the man left the shelter Ms. Methvin contacted the case worker to let her know the man was being sent home so that they could ensure the man had groceries available.

Unlike her experiences with Alabama shelters, she worked both the medical needs and the mass population shelter. Another difference is that the people in the shelter were familiar with the area and she was the stranger in most cases. Since they knew the community better, she would sometimes just talk problems out with them and they would come up with their own solutions.

"Sometimes they wanted someone to lend them an ear, but mostly they were trying to get resources and I would make calls to assist them," she said. Although her work

shift hours were 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., there was nowhere else to go so she made herself available as needed.

Many of the National Guard members even sought out the "Alabama nurses" to receive treatment while stationed at the armory. The team also dealt with a suspected norovirus outbreak in the shelter which included one of their nurses and both of the Red Cross nurses who were working the armory. The nurses also provided personal assistance with the activities of daily living, such as sponge baths to those who were without their normal caretakers.

For Life Care Nurse Teresa Moore of the Morgan County Health Department, years of experience in home health proved valuable. She said, "When you're doing home health you learn so many things to look for, such as symptoms that are serious enough to send a patient to the hospital."

The nurses became concerned and sent one person with a heart condition and another with low blood sugar which could not be elevated to the local hospital. "We made sure people weren't dehydrated when they had gastrointestinal illnesses," she said.

Challenges included providing personal care for a very large and heavy woman in a motorized wheelchair, and getting sleep

during the day when there is a lot of coming and going. Training and preparation made the difference, she said. While they missed breakfast and lunch, they had brought snacks to substitute for the meals.

Administrative Assistant Jessica Smith commented that there were very close quarters at the Paducah shelter which was filled to capacity. Her job was to run errands and assist others with supplies. "We got a reputation for helping to keep morale up," she said. "However, we were very impressed with the attitudes of those who stayed at the shelter. They were quick to help each other and also help out with the duties of the shelter."

The city's two hospitals were filled to capacity, so the nurses filled the void at the shelter. Social issues included consoling a 91-year-old woman whose house was destroyed when a tree fell on it and dealing with an elderly man with dementia who could not understand why he wasn't at home.

"The spirit of cooperation from all agencies and supportive individuals" made dealing with the crisis possible. Ms. Smith had high praise for local physician Dr. John T. Cecil Jr. who made daily sick calls to the shelter and prescribed much-needed medicine. Likewise,

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Team From Area 7 and 9 Receives Kentucky Colonel Designation

The Commonwealth of Kentucky expressed its appreciation to the Area 7 and 9 teams by presenting each of them the prestigious honorary title of Kentucky Colonels, a designation bestowed upon individuals by approval of the governor of Kentucky. Shown holding their certificates are, front row, left to right: Debbie Jones, Debbie Thomasson, Betty Jowers, Audra Wilson, back row, left to right: Peggy Roberts, Charlotte Whittaker (a Kentucky shelter manager who awarded the certificates), Barbara Etheridge, Ricky Elliott, Suzanne Terrell. The certificates were presented April 1.



so pleasant and caring.”

Elizabethtown

Nurse Administrator Pam Moody of Public Health Area 3 and her team went to Elizabethtown and were pleased to find their shelter at the Hardin County EMS building had power, cell phone service and food service.

“Area 3’s team was very cohesive,” Ms. Moody said. “Every team member gave 102 percent to assure that shelter operations were organized and efficient, seasoned with humility and compassion. We made friendships with many of Hardin County’s citizens that will last a lifetime.”

Tim Hatch, MPA, REHS, environmental program director with the Center for Emergency Preparedness, drove a fully packed Dooley to the site. While Kentucky had said its need was for nurses, Hatch’s environmental experience also proved helpful in preventing the spread of disease.

“We knew there was a boil water notice in effect, but people in the shelter were drinking from the water fountains,” Hatch said, “so we put up signage and even ‘crime scene’ tape around the drinking fountains.” Another potential hazard was the fact that there was no plan in place to remove soiled linen from the premises, so he worked with the local EMTs to remove the linens.

“Our operations plan worked as intended and we were well equipped. Our communications and logistical support were great,” he emphasized. “We were able to get forms faxed to us from Alabama which we used to send daily environmental health assessment forms.” Hatch said, “I can’t say enough about our staff, and I’ll reiterate that our public health nurses are top notch, not only in the social aspects but in their clinical and management skills. They hit the ground running and put forth a great effort. They knew what to do and were good at their jobs. The nurses and the other members of our team were experienced, well prepared, well trained, and had the right supplies.”

Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear visited the Elizabethtown shelter for over an hour and personally thanked each member of the team. In a news interview the governor singled out the “three wonderful groups from Alabama” for special thanks.

Later at the Pritchard Community Center the team found most of the patients were on oxygen, there was a quadriplegic, many had chronic lung problems. Their ages were mostly in the late 60s and

Cecil called the Area 2 team “angels who were



The Area 6 team is shown, front row (left to right) Lori Bell, Mark Hendrix, Robbie Stubbs; second row, Aimee Willis, Rosemary Humber, Margy Israel, Rhonda Cofield.

70s. The team worked 12-hour shifts at the medical needs shelter; from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

“We enjoyed getting to serve,” Ms. Moody said, “and it was a life-changing experience I will never forget. Public Health is never boring!”

Second Rotation Poses Different Challenges

The first group of teams deployed were on duty from Saturday, Jan. 31 through Thursday, Feb. 5. Lori Bell, Nursing Director for Public Health Area 6, was a member of the second team activated and worked in two locations: first an Army National Guard Armory in Paducah and then at a Baptist church in Bardwell.

While they encountered very few medical needs, gastrointestinal illness was the concern there. They isolated some patients and instituted infection control. They also administered minor first aid to some disaster relief teams for windburn, sunburn and abrasions.

“Every disaster is different. Sometimes we had the chance to talk with the people about their experiences. Some had some very interesting stories, such as the full-blooded native American woman in her 70s who told us she had never been out of Bardwell,” Ms. Bell said. “It was enjoyable, and we were glad we went.”

Robbie Stubbs, Surveillance Nurse Supervisor for PHA 6, who was also at these two shelters, found the weather was very cold when they arrived, but before leaving they needed short-sleeved shirts.

“We educated the shelter residents on handwashing. As anyone came into the building they got antibacterial foam in their hands. We swirled foam in the hands of those standing in the meal line. We also cleaned and disinfected toilets, toilet handles, door handles and showers with bleach daily. Bleach was used because it destroys bacteria with spores as well. There were only three people who became sick while we were there, and none of our team became ill. By the time the shelter closed, there were no people remaining ill.”

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A veteran of hurricanes, Dennis, Ivan and Katrina, Mrs. Stubbs agrees, "Every experience is totally different. These people differed in that they had homes to return to. Their water pipes were damaged and power out, but they still had homes standing."

Adapting to a different culture was a challenge. "With the rural population we didn't want to intrude on their values. As Public Health employees, we strive to adapt to all situations. We offered education and assistance to shelter residents and other volunteers. We organized a storage closet for contributions and donations that the church was receiving. We assisted with food preparation and service. Some of our team members kept small children at the shelter while their parents returned to their homes to clean during the day. Responding to disasters is always a rewarding experience and we always learn something. There were also Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief teams from Alabama and Florida housed at the Bardwell shelter. They were clearing debris for the power repair trucks. Teams from Tennessee drove back and forth daily about 45 minutes each way to prepare the meals for the shelter."

We agreed to abide by this Area 6 mentality, "We get the job done whatever the job is, and nobody's finished until everybody's finished."

Getting Back to Normal

The team from the Jefferson County Department of Health was one of the second teams deployed and worked in three different shelters, Southern Elementary School in Beaver Dam, The Render Center in Hartford and Sacramento Methodist Church in Sacramento, Ky. The team's main responsibility was to locate resources for the evacuees in the shelters so that the shelters could close and the communities return to "normal."

Registered Nurse Julie Cobb states, "I think

the best visual I had was on Monday when we worked 3-11 and were behind a school bus on the way to the shelter--the kids looked so happy getting off the school bus. Closing down the shelters and going home was a very positive thing."

Cathy Johnson, clinical nursing director, said, "Each county and community was extremely appreciative and grateful for the services we were able to provide."

Experience Alleviates Fear

Nurse Educator Thresa Dix of the Public Health Nursing Division was also in the second rotation. First she was in a Red Cross shelter in Cadiz where they cared for 30 people, both medical needs and general population, and then at a Retirement Center in Grand River where they cared for four people.

"The first seven days of any rotation are chaotic," Ms. Dix commented. "Life is 99 percent attitude. If you choose to make it positive, it will be all right. We were glad to have a really good, cohesive team who were patient, had a positive attitude and were flexible."

By working in a shelter she believes a lot of fear was alleviated among team members who had never before been deployed.

Kentucky Expresses Appreciation

Dr. Kraig E. Humbaugh, director of the Division of Epidemiology and Health Planning of the Kentucky Department for Public Health, wrote Center for Emergency Preparedness director Andy Mullins the following:

"We really appreciated the special needs shelter teams that you all sent to Kentucky during the recent ice storm that hit the state. We had nothing but positive comments from our local health department folks about the tireless assistance that your public health professionals provided.

"Without the help of other Region IV states, we would not have been able to mount such an effective public health response in order to protect our citizens. Your teams were crucial to the effort, at a time when many of our own public health workers and volunteers were dealing with their own personal emergencies at home."

Respect Is Mutual

Good planning and organization made the deployment successful. Elliott advised, "If you ever get the opportunity to be deployed, be at the front of the line. This is a chance to change you as an individual."

In fact the Area 7 and 9 shelter team was presented a framed collage of photos of the experience which was made by the local people. Gov. Steve Beshear of Kentucky visited the Paducah shelter for more than one hour to thank the volunteers for their service.

Andy Mullins, director of the Center for Emergency Preparedness, wrote, "Thanks to all of the staff who responded, whether as a team member, in support of the teams, or by picking up the slack where staff members have deployed on a team. That is what has made this response so smooth and effective." While Alabama has experienced very limited deployments in the past, this is the first large scale and long-term deployment for Emergency Preparedness.

Alabama responded under the authority of EMAC, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which is "a congressionally ratified organization that provides form and structure to interstate mutual aid." Through the compact a disaster-impacted state can request and receive assistance from other member states quickly and efficiently. This revolves the key issues of liability and reimbursement.

Hatch concluded, "Public health is a profession, and we're good at caring for people. It was

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Steps to a HealthierAL Works to Reduce Health Risk Factors

For the past five years the Steps to a HealthierAL Program has worked in schools, worksites and other community settings to engage Alabama communities in activities to prevent the ever-increasing incidence of chronic disease.

Chronic diseases affect almost half of Americans and account for 7 of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States. Chronic diseases and conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, arthritis, and obesity cause suffering and limitations to daily functioning.

Preventable health-risk factors such as physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use and exposure contribute greatly to the development and severity of many chronic diseases. The following are just a few of the many projects which have helped further these goals by reducing health risk factors:

Route 66: Life is a Highway—A new fitness program for sixth graders at Eclectic Middle School

This program allows students to check out pedometers and keep up with individual and team mileage along a 21,000 mile route. Students who do not ordinarily excel in sports-oriented activities were able to complete the activity at their own pace, thus promoting further involvement. Students were also able to watch a Super Size Me video, play portion control bingo, and use fat replica models.

Body and Soul Makeover

Through the support of Steps to a Healthier AL, River Region, New Harvest Church of Christ implemented the Body and Soul program to empower church members to eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables daily and to engage in physical activity programs for better health. The program was designed for African American churches to help their members take care of their bodies as well as their spirits by engaging in activities and education supporting healthy lifestyles, creating a church environment that supports healthy eating, supporting peer counseling to motivate members to live healthier lives, and implementing policies to enforce health and wellness in the church.

Educating Alabama's Elected Officials

Steps to a HealthierAL, River Region, has been educating elected officials about its programs to raise awareness and to highlight positive program outcomes, emphasizing the sustainable policy, systems and environmental changes that have been achieved. This has both increased awareness of free or reduced cost health programs available to their constituents and increased awareness of the health problems that face their constituents. As a result, beneficial policies, system and environmental changes can be realized which create healthy communities.

It's a Jungle Out There

Steps to a HealthierAL, Southeast Alabama Region, and Troy University have been partners for four years in support of the Asthma Safari. This is a program designed to teach children with asthma methods of identifying triggers, creating plans, controlling asthma episodes, relating to health care providers and leading healthier lives. For 10 years the Asthma Safari has been supported by federally funded grants. To make the program sustainable for the communities regardless of grant funding, partners resolved to find an entity to continue the program going forward. As a result, the university's Health Promotion Department has made this a program requirement and a fraternity chapter has made this a yearly project.

Steps to a HealthierAL community-based interventions are funded in two specific regions of Alabama. The Steps Southeastern Alabama Region is led by the Charles Henderson Child Health Care Center and includes Barbour and Pike counties. The Steps River Region, organized by the Montgomery Area Community Wellness Coalition, includes Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes, Macon and Montgomery counties.

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 asheehan@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.

**Karl Bryant
Danny Doyle**
Health Marketing
from Tim Hatch
Montgomery, Ala.

Jonathan Edwards
Wellness
from Video Communications
Montgomery, Ala.

Evelyn Jackson
Center for Health Statistics
from Lola Mae James-Thompson
Pensacola, Fla.

Reginald Strickland
Center for Health Statistics
from Sheila Murray
Talladega, Ala.

**Wykeshia Davison
Amy Moore
Joni Phelps
Regina Runderson
Charlyne White**
Health Provider Standards
from Marilyn Denney, R.N.
Bay Minette, Ala.

Tom Geary, M.D.
Health Provider Standards
from Peggy Sue Harris
Gardendale, Ala.

Eric Morgan
TB Prevention and Control
from Aletha Lewis
Montgomery, Ala.

Knoxye Williams
Children's Health
Insurance Program
from Gayle Sandlin
Wetumpka, Ala.

Tamika Lewis
Center for Health Statistics
from Patricia Johnson
Panama City, Fla.

Deborah Pullom
Dallas County Health
Department
from Genevieve Moore
Montgomery, Ala.

In Memoriam Carole W. Samuelson, M.D.

Former Jefferson County Health Officer Carole Wilkerson Samuelson, M.D., died Feb. 14 after a long and courageous battle with ovarian cancer and dermatomyositis. Dr. Samuelson served as Jefferson County Health Officer for 17 years, retiring in March 2002. She also served as Interim State Health Officer from June to November 1992.

While serving as Jefferson County Health Officer, Dr. Samuelson oversaw and established numerous innovative programs. Among these were the Healthy Start program to reduce infant mortality and the development of school-based clinics in four area schools. Dr. Samuelson also served on the medical staff of the Children's Hospital of Alabama for over 25 years and had an extensive association with the University of Alabama at Birmingham. From 1980 until 2005 she served as Adjunct Assistant Professor, Clinical Assistant Professor and Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at UAB. She

was also Adjunct Assistant Professor at the UAB School of Public Health for more than 20 years.

Dr. Samuelson served on numerous boards and committees. She sat on the Board of Directors for Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, United Way, and Project Impact—Building A Disaster Resistant Community. She was a participant in Leadership Birmingham and later served on the Board of Trustees. She was a member of the Women's Network and served as president in 1993. She was also a founding member and on the Board of Directors for Region 2020, The Central Alabama Community Planning Project. In addition, she served on the Board of Directors for Alethia House and Indian Springs School.

Dr. Samuelson received many honors and awards for her service to the community. Included among them are Birmingham Business Journal Top Ten Birmingham Women; American Society for Public Health/Central

Alabama Chapter Administrator of the Year; Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence in Public Health; the Medical Association of the State of Alabama William Henry Sanders Award, and Cahaba Girl Scout Council Woman of Distinction.

In lieu of flowers the family requested donations be sent to the Samuelson Fund for Promotion of Public Health in care of The Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, 2100 First Avenue North, Suite 700, Birmingham, Ala. 35203.



Carole W. Samuelson, M.D.

Halsey Rhodes Receives James H. Baker Exemplar Award

The Division of TB Control is pleased to announce that Halsey Rhodes, TB Program Manager for Public Health Area 11, was awarded the James H. Baker Exemplar Award for his efforts in combating tuberculosis during 2008.

The Baker Award was established by Dr. Donald E. Williamson in 2004 to recognize and honor Jim Baker for his 40-year commitment to excellence in public health and for his “can do” attitude. In each succeeding year, individual nominations are solicited from across the state and one member of the Division is selected who best reflects Baker’s attributes of commitment, dedication, and professional excellence.

Since joining ADPH in 2007, Rhodes accepted the challenge of re-building the TB team in Public Health Area 11. He recruited a cadre of young professionals who are already providing public health benefit to citizens in Mobile County. Rhodes’ influence also extended beyond Public Health Area 11, as he and other members of his staff volunteered to beta test a new TB program module for the NEDSS base system. His work contributed significantly to the subsequent and successful statewide roll out of this new surveillance software. During the period of performance covered by this award, Rhodes volunteered to assist his counterparts in other areas of the

state--spending long hours away from his family in support of complex case management issues.

Rhodes’ background includes a stint as a Public Health Advisor with CDC’s Division of TB Elimination and as a Hospital Corpsman with the U.S. Coast Guard. Prior to joining ADPH, he served as the Director for Field Services and Evaluation for the Bureau of TB & Refugee Health in Florida. He is a valued member of our TB field staff who is keeping alive the standard of excellence set by Jim Baker.

By PAM BARRETT



Shown (left to right) are Jim Baker, retired employee for whom the award is named; Halsey Rhodes, 2008 recipient; and Dr. William Bailey, chairman of the TB Advisory Council.

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a good experience.”

The service given by these individuals was stellar. Their commitment to public health was evident in their joyful spirits as they worked tirelessly to serve others.

Hatch of the Center for Emergency Preparedness and Ms. Dix were deployed from the RSA Tower in Montgomery. Other employees who were deployed are as follows:

Area 2: Karen Butler, Pamela Galbreath, Rebecca Gibson, Stacy Methvin, Teresa Moore, Sondra Nassetta, Jessica M. Smith.

Area 3: Annie Bishop, Brenda Bridges, Marsha Carr, Mary Miranda Hammonds, Connie Lightsey, Elizabeth Mize, Pam Moody.

Areas 7 and 9: Ricky Elliott, Barbara Etheridge, Debbie Jones, Betty Jowers, Peggy Roberts, Suzanne Terrell, Debbie Thomasson, Audra Wilson.

SECOND GROUP

Area 4: Julie Cobb, Ellen Crotty, Cathy Johnson, Sherry Lochamy, Yvonne McKinnon, Lannie Sears-Mitchell, Wayne Studyvin.

Area 6: Lori Bell, Rhonda Cofield, Mark Hendrix, Rosemary Humber, Margy Israel, Robbie Stubbs, Aimee Wills.

Area 8: Melanie Boggan, Linda Bowen, Mary Conway, Kellie Courtney, Cheryl Debardeleben, Leilani Williams, Sandra Williams.



April is National Donate Life Month

How many things can you do to save a life today? Maybe the lives of several people?

April has been designated as National Donate Life Month, to honor those who have given the gift of life to others and remind all of us of the growing need for donation.

Organ and tissue donation is perhaps the most selfless act that any of us can offer. It is a gift that cannot be valued in any human term. Over the past 55 years, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children have enjoyed a renewed opportunity for life and health through transplantation. But this opportunity can only be made possible when someone, somewhere makes a life – giving commitment.

The need for organ and tissue donation is greater today than it ever has been. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, more than 100,000 people are now awaiting a life-saving organ transplant. While we have seen increases in donation nationwide,

tragically, about 6,000 people die each year without the opportunity to receive a life-saving transplant. Despite the increases in donation nationwide, the demand for transplantation grows at an even faster rate. More than 3,100 people are on the waiting list in Alabama.

While most people understand and appreciate the good that comes from organ and tissue transplantation, many have not taken the simple actions to ensure that those in need can have an opportunity to receive a life-giving transplant. It is as simple as indicating your wishes on an ID card, donor card or drivers license and, most importantly, talking with your loved ones about your willingness and desire to help others through donation after death.

More information is available from the Alabama Organ Center by calling 1-800-252-3677 or via Internet at www.AlabamaOrganCenter.org.

Submitted by Karen Hutto and Angela Haffarnan with the Alabama Organ Center

Calendar of Events



April 22

Developing and Following Your Plan of Care, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Video Communications (334) 206-5618.



April 23

Understanding the Role of Healthcare Providers in Treating Victims of Workplace Sexual Violence, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

For more information contact Video Communications (334) 206-5618.



April 30

Learning to Love MySpace: Web 2.0 as a Healthy Youth Development Strategy, 10 a.m.-12 noon.

For more information contact Video Communications (334) 206-5618.