

ALABAMA'S HEALTH

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A CENTENNIAL OF SAFE MILK

Milk --- these days, it does a body good. But back in the early 1900s, not so much. Back then, milkborne outbreaks were responsible for 25 percent of all disease outbreaks linked to infected food and contaminated water. Currently, that number is less than 1 percent.

This huge improvement in the safety of milk and fluid milk products can be traced back to the Standard Milk Ordinance of 1924. Developed by the U.S. Public Health Service, the Standard Milk Ordinance called for all cities, counties, and states to follow the same set of regulations regarding milk safety. Alabama was the first state to adopt the ordinance, and the rest of the country quickly followed.

In 1950, the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS) held its first conference. The NCIMS brought all states together annually to continue to strengthen milk safety programs in the U.S. By 1977, NCIMS and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had formally joined together to ensure that federal and state governments worked hand-in-hand with the dairy industry to continue to monitor and improve the safety of the nation's milk supply.

This year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is celebrating [100 Years of Milk & Dairy Safety](#).

Raw Milk Concerns

Perhaps the most important step in keeping milk safe is the process of pasteurization, which involves heating milk to a high enough temperature to kill harmful germs. Raw milk, or milk which is not pasteurized, is considered one of the riskiest foods, as it can carry a variety of harmful bacteria such as E. coli, Listeria, and Salmonella. People who get sick from raw milk can suffer a variety of consequences ranging from diarrhea to vomiting to paralysis and even death.

Despite these well-known and documented risks, a small number of Americans (less than 1 percent) choose to drink raw milk. Raw milk sales are prohibited in 20 states, including Alabama, and allowed in 30 states.



Russell Harry, Milk Specialist, and Audra Phillips, Milk Branch Director, check milking equipment at Auburn University's dairy farm.

By Blu Gilliland

WIPE OUT CERVICAL CANCER ALABAMA RECOGNIZED

The *WIPE OUT Cervical Cancer Alabama* leadership team, including Nancy Wright, M.P.H., Director of the Cancer Prevention and Control Division, was recently invited to attend the White House Biden Moonshot Cervical Cancer Forum held January 25. During the forum's panel discussions, Alabama was mentioned as the state leading the effort to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem. The other team members were Dr. Isabel Scarinci from the UAB Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Heather White, Executive Director of TogetHER for Health.

WIPE OUT Cervical Cancer Alabama is a statewide effort to engage and empower every Alabamian to share the news that cervical cancer can be stopped and to take the steps toward protecting our families, friends, and neighbors from this deadly cancer. In order to WIPE OUT Cervical Cancer in the next decade (our lifetime!) there are three steps:

- 1) Increase HPV vaccination.** The human papillomavirus (HPV) is what causes cervical cancer. The vaccine protects against ever getting cervical cancer.
- 2) Increase cervical cancer screening - HPV/Pap tests.** Regular screening will identify cervical cancer and pre-cancer early when it is easy to remove.
- 3) Appropriate follow-up if the screening results show abnormal cells.** It is important to return to your physician if your HPV/Pap test comes back abnormal so that the cells can be removed. Help spread the word; it only takes three steps to ensure women in Alabama don't ever get cervical cancer!

Moonshot Cervical Cancer Forum

The White House Biden Moonshot Cervical Cancer Forum energized momentum from all sectors to the mission of reducing the impact of cervical cancer through screening and prevention, including boosting HPV vaccination and improving equity and outcomes.



An excellent documentary presentation featured Operation WIPE OUT Cervical Cancer Alabama. Among the public health leaders interviewed for the documentary and recently for a Wall Street Journal article are shown, from left, Nancy Wright; Dr. Gary Pugh, Medical Officer, Bureau of Family Health Services; Nurse Practitioner Neysa Hernandez and Nurse Practitioner DaJuna Tatom.

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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PUBLIC HEALTH EMPLOYEES ARE ‘THE SILENT GUARDIANS OF HEALTH’

It has long been recognized that much of the work of public health is done behind the scenes and is taken for granted when things go well. The efforts and successes of Alabama Department of Public Health employees are both silent and invisible to many people – that is, until there is a crisis such as a deadly pandemic or a natural disaster which puts a spotlight on the broad scope of their work.

A video titled “Silent Guardians of Health” introduces public health professionals who put into practice the slogan “Alabama’s Health is Job #1.” The video highlights the meaningful work done by dedicated public health employees each day to promote and protect the public from disease, injury, and other threats.

Each employee provides sincere and candid accounts of their challenging work and caring on behalf of Alabama residents. From prenatal services to taking care of older Alabamians, daily activities of a few of the individual employees fulfilling various roles who are featured in the video are listed here.

- Keep people safe by maintaining clean drinking water through proper sewage disposal, ensuring safe food handling practices to prevent foodborne illness, inspecting food service establishments, and investigating vectors of human disease.
- Protect the vulnerable by making visits to patients in their homes, especially those who have trouble getting to doctors’ appointments, and provide the only home health pediatric care available within the state of Alabama.
- Provide for Alabamians’ needs behind the scenes in administrative roles, always willing to lend a hand to others.

- Help women, infants, and children, even those living in remote rural areas, access the nutrition education and nutritious food they need.
- Educate Alabamians about different illnesses and conditions, ways to prevent illness, and get confidential treatment when needed.
- Find ways that help ensure a happier and healthier community and enhance lives by effectively utilizing resources, solving problems, and building relationships.

Among the employees whose interviews were recorded for the video are Marsha Beebe, Jeremy Bryant, Petria Caldwell, Joe Congleton, Camilla English, Amber Hester, Wendy Ledbetter, Stacy Lewis, Anthony Merriweather, Amber Todd, and Crystalee Walters.

In a message for Employee Recognition Day, State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris stated, “We appreciate the many committed public servants who care deeply about the people they serve and fulfill the mission of public health.”



WIC Nutrition Director Stacy Lewis of the Baldwin County Health Department is one of the featured employees.

ACTIONS BY WIC EMPLOYEES TINA PARKER AND DEBBIE SEWELL HELP SAVE BABY’S LIFE

Members of the Marengo County WIC staff were concerned about the health of a newborn infant who was brought to the WIC office. Suspecting something was wrong with the baby, they contacted a doctor about their concerns and told the mother to take the baby to the emergency room at once. From there, the newborn was sent for treatment in Birmingham.

In a conversation with Natalie Clements, R.D.N., IBCLC, Nutrition Services Coordinator with the Jefferson County Department of Health, the physician who treated the child in Birmingham mentioned to her that the baby did not have an

appointment to be seen by the primary provider until 2 weeks of age and would not have survived without treatment.

The Birmingham physician was highly complimentary of the WIC staff for suspecting the life-threatening medical emergency, and Ms. Clements said, “I am so proud of our teams.”

State WIC Nutrition Services Director Pam Galloway thanked Nutrition Associate Tina Parker and Laboratory Aide Debbie Sewell for assisting the mother and baby. She said, “This is a wonderful example of the care and compassion of WIC staff and the positive impact it can have.”

JEFFERSON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INITIATES NALOXONE PARTNERSHIP

The Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH) is initiating a first-time partnership with the Jefferson County Association of Fire Chiefs and the Central Alabama Fire Chiefs Association to increase access to naloxone and reduce opioid-related overdose deaths in Jefferson County.

JCDH will provide 600 doses of naloxone to the organizations mentioned above, potentially saving hundreds of lives.



According to information available from the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office, Jefferson County had 493 overdose deaths in 2023, up 9 percent from 2022 and more than double the 236 deaths reported in 2019. Data available from the state's EMS system indicates that EMS responded to more than 4,800 suspected overdose calls in Jefferson County in 2023. This has increased demand for EMS services and the naloxone administered by first responders. In addition to fentanyl, which is the cause of most fatal overdoses in Jefferson County, Xylazine and the nitazenes are present in the drug supply and found in the toxicology of overdose deaths in Jefferson County. Some members of the nitazene family are more potent than fentanyl, further increasing the risk of overdose for those who are actively using substances and increasing the need for higher doses of naloxone to reverse an overdose fully.

"We are grateful for the first responders in Jefferson County who are fighting this epidemic alongside us and are honored to partner with them to bring more resources to our community. We are aligned in our mission to reduce overdose deaths in Jefferson County," said Dr. Darlene Traffanstedt, Medical Director at JCDH.

JCDH offers free opioid overdose reversal medications to anyone in the State of Alabama in partnership with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Public Health. Everyone should consider visiting the website at www.jcdh.org/naloxone to become trained on the safe use of opioid overdose reversal medications and obtain a free opioid overdose kit. Fentanyl test strips, used to assess for the presence of fentanyl in substances, are also available free on the JCDH website to anyone in Alabama. Questions about online training can be emailed to naloxonetraining@jcdh.org.

Help is available for those struggling with substance use through a free 24/7 substance use helpline at 1-844-307-1760. This is a statewide service sponsored by the Alabama Department of Mental Health and staffed by peer recovery support specialists from the Recovery Organization of Support Specialists to help individuals navigate treatment and recovery systems. Individuals may also call the Recovery Resource Center at 205-458-3377.

The Connect Alabama app is another effective way to find more information on substance use resources..

JCDH recently launched ALAHOPE, an online curriculum for health professionals and others to learn more about substance use disorders. This project was a collaboration between JCDH, the UAB School of Health Professions, the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners, and the Auburn University Harrison College of Pharmacy. Free continuing education is offered for various health professions, but the online content is available to anyone. The curriculum can be accessed at www.alahope.org.

By Wanda Heard

CDC DIRECTOR PRAISES LOCAL EFFORTS

Mandy Cohen, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, spoke about local efforts around substance abuse treatment and overdose prevention when she visited with health leaders and dignitaries at the Jefferson County Department of Health February 22.



DR. MARY MCINTYRE AWARDED PRESIDENTIAL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Former Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mary G. McIntyre and her husband Dr. Julian McIntyre were honored with the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award. The Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award honors individuals who complete more than 4,000 hours of service in their lifetime and is the highest-level honor of the President's Volunteer Service Award. They were presented with this award by a White House representative at the Davis Theatre in Montgomery in February. Dr. McIntyre retired in May 2022.



EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT GOES RED

East Central District social workers, from left, Cynthia Foster, Veronica Postell and Sandra Curry wore red for heart on National Wear Red Day 2024. They were among those who distributed educational materials to 45 people to help raise awareness of women's No. 1 killer – cardiovascular disease.



PRESENTATION KICKS OFF NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

Auburn University student and dietetic intern Daniel Martin made a lunch-and-learn presentation to employees in the RSA Tower March 1 to kick off National Nutrition Month. His topic was "Healthful Habits That Go Beyond the Table." He provided tips to learn how to make informed food choices and develop healthful eating and physical activity habits. Martin interned with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division.



RETIREES

The following departmental employees have retired recently:

NOVEMBER

Bettie Dixon

Bureau of Home and
Community Services

Inga Jackson

Bureau of Clinical Laboratories

Angela Keener

Northeastern Public Health District

Crystal Tymes

Bureau of Information Technology

DECEMBER

Kenneth Owen

West Central Public Health District

JANUARY

Sarah Birmingham

Northeastern Public Health District

Cindy Brewer

West Central Public Health District

Patricia Corbitt

Southeastern Public Health District

Regina Griffin

East Central Public Health District

Bessie Harris

West Central Public Health District

Pamela Hollis

Northern Public Health District

Tereasa Jackson

Health Care Facilities

Kay Jacobs

Northeastern Public Health District

Lynn Jacobs

Northeastern Public Health District

Gail Johnson

Office of HIV Prevention and Care

Alexis Lockhart

Northeastern Public Health District

Jane McMunn

Bureau of Information Technology

Bill Myers

Bureau of Information Technology

Renee Overton

Northern Public Health District

Rhonda Owens

Northeastern Public Health District

Melissa Reaves-Tillery

Office of HIV Prevention and Care

Gwendolyn Roberson

Northeastern Public Health District

Arnita Shepherd

Operations Division

Teresa Shields

West Central Public Health District

Nancy Strong

Bureau of Clinical Laboratories

Rebecca Warren

Division of Immunization

Angelica Webb

Bureau of Clinical Laboratories

Byron Webb

Bureau of Environmental Services

FEBRUARY

Randell Ball

Northern Public Health District

Mary Conway

East Central Public Health District

K C Jones

Northern Public Health District

Beverly Moore

Office of HIV Prevention and Care

Stephanie Weathers

Northeastern Public Health District

MARCH

Ronald Berry

Southeastern Public Health District

Gloria Castell

West Central Public Health District

Sonja Davis

Northern Public Health District

Nedra Driver

Southwestern Public Health District

Cindy Dyer

Bureau of Prevention,
Promotion, and Support

Ann Langley

East Central Public Health District

Jackquelyn Parker

Southeastern Public Health District

Robert Suell

Office of Radiation Control

APRIL

Denise Kappelman

Northern Public Health District

Coretta Morris

Northeastern Public Health District

Susan Romero

Northern Public Health District

Sandra Scott

Northern Public Health District

MARCUS JOHNSON RECOGNIZED

Christine Cook, C.P.M., Chief Procurement Officer with the Alabama Department of Finance, recently commended ADPH Procurement Officer Marcus Johnson for doing an outstanding job.

She wrote that Johnson's attributes include understanding the rules, compliance, and being a good source of information. When she asked her staff about agency representatives who stood out, his name came up more than once.

Johnson is a Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) who has been employed with the Bureau of Financial Services for more than 10 years and for 18 years with state government. He is a graduate of Auburn University at Montgomery with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and holds a Master in Taxation degree from Troy University Montgomery.

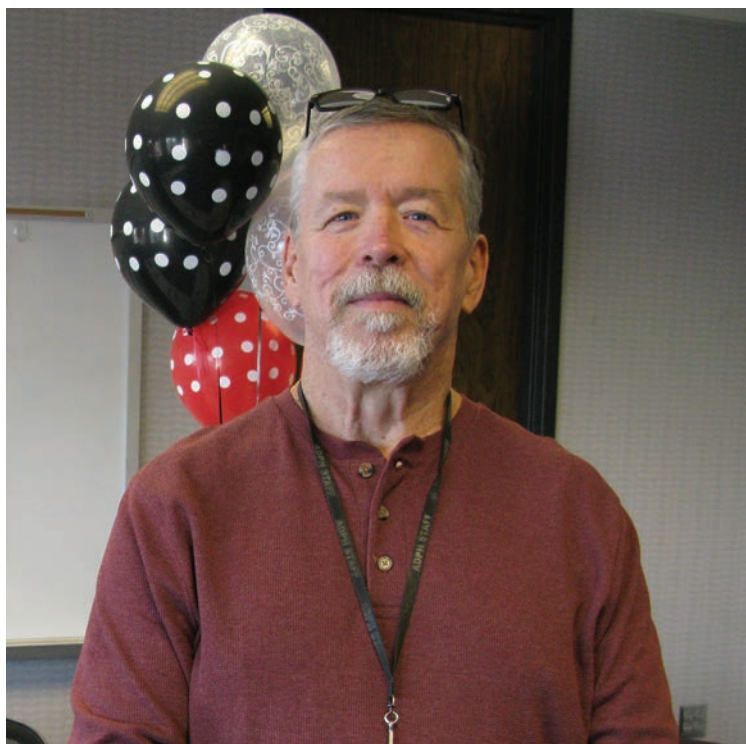




The Northeastern District celebrated District Clinic Director Lori Bell's nearly 36-year retirement at the Calhoun County Health Department effective March 1. She is shown at center with Assistant District Administrator Mark Johnson and, at right, District Administrator Mary Gomillion.



Rosie Hudson of the Office of HIV Prevention and Care, left, receives a citation from Office Director Sharon Jordan upon her retirement.



Coworkers honored Ronnie McLendon of the Bureau of Information Technology for his 43 years of service at a celebration in Montgomery January 29.



Sharon Jordan, center, Director of the Office of HIV Prevention and Care, retired after more than 40 years of service. At her retirement reception on March 27, she is shown with Chief Medical Officer Dr. Karen Landers and State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris.

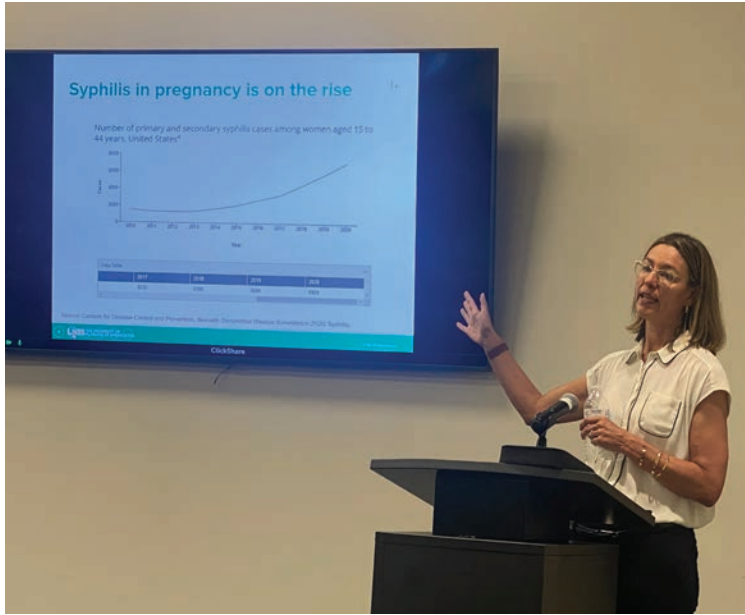
ALABAMA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION HOLDS 64TH HEALTH EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The Alabama Public Health Association held a streamlined educational conference April 2 at the ADPH Training Annex in Prattville. The 64th conference theme, held on-site and presented virtually, was “Preserving the Past and Embracing the Future of Public Health.”

In opening remarks, State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris noted that the entire world has changed since the previous annual meeting was held in 2019. While more than 22,000 people were lost to COVID-19, remarkably, our healthcare system did not break.

A positive development from the COVID year 2022 for Alabama is that Alabama had the lowest infant mortality rate in state history. Dr. Harris said, "Clearly our hospitals and nurses are doing tremendous work."

With state funding in 2024, it is hoped that nine Alabama counties in maternity deserts will be providing prenatal care to the underserved. Other concerns include the rapid resurgence of congenital syphilis and measles. It is expected that measles, now reported in more than a dozen states, will be Alabama's next outbreak. Another current communicable disease concern is avian influenza in humans. Dr. Harris advised attendees that rebuilding trust in public health, which some consider a casualty of COVID, involves both giving the best advice one can based on training and expertise, listening, and caring for each individual.



Dr. Claudette Poole's address was titled "Syphilis and HIV in Pregnancy - Management of Infants." Dr. Poole is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the UAB School of Medicine, Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases.



Dr. Scott Harris welcomes attendees.



"The the Importance of Community in Public Health Practice" was the title for a presentation by State Social Work Director Bill Kennedy.

HEALTHY HABITS FOR HEALTHY SMILES PROMOTED IN SEVENTH ANNUAL CONTEST

The Oral Health Office of the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) announced the winners of the seventh annual smile photo contest for third grade students in Alabama. A boy and a girl were selected from photo submissions as the overall winners of the “Share Your Smile with Alabama” campaign for 2024. Chosen were Denia Washington who attends Martin Luther King, Jr., Elementary School in Montgomery and Chase Johnson who attends Brewbaker Intermediate School, also in Montgomery. Denia is the daughter of Marquita Davis and Denzel Washington. Chase is the son of Rexton and Keondra Johnson. The third graders are being highlighted in departmental marketing campaigns to promote children’s oral health in the state.

The theme for National Children’s Dental Health Month 2024 was “Healthy Habits for Healthy Smiles.”



NATIONAL CHILDREN’S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Congratulations to

DENIA WASHINGTON & CHASE JOHNSON

winners of the seventh annual “SHARE YOUR SMILE WITH ALABAMA” photo contest


Alabama Department of Public Health Oral Health Office




For smiles like CHASE and DENIA that last a lifetime:

- Children ages 1-17 years old need to have preventive dental visits twice yearly
- Optimal levels of Community Water Fluoridation should be present where you live
- Protect your child from certain head and neck cancers with the HPV vaccine at age 9

ALABAMAPUBLICHEALTH.GOV/ORALHEALTH



ORAL HEALTH OFFICE
Promoting Smiles Across a Lifetime



FAMILY OF D’TANJA BROCK SELECTED AS FGC FAMILY OF THE YEAR

Shown in embrace, from left, are Joana, Anthony, D'Tanja and Noah Brock.

The Family Guidance Center of Alabama has honored the family of an Alabama Department of Public Health employee, D’Tanja Brock, as a Family of the Year 2023.

Mrs. Brock is assistant to Dr. Gary Pugh, medical officer, Bureau of Family Health Services. She and her husband Anthony are the parents of Noah, a full academic scholarship student at Tuskegee University, and junior high school student Jonah. Anthony Brock is headmaster of Valiant Cross Academy, a faith-based school for boys located in downtown Montgomery near D’Tanja’s office in the RSA Tower.

Founding Valiant Cross Academy took a lot of faith and commitment which was made possible because “We know He’s guiding us every step of the way.”

In a recent television interview about their award, the Brocks spoke of their Christian faith which guides them as a family and the fact that they pray for one another throughout the day. Active members of St. Paul A.M.E. Church, they also volunteer throughout the community. They characterize their family as one that enjoys their teamwork and “aren’t all work and no play.” The Brock daughters say they enjoy being “silly” from time to time. Jonah Brock is a volleyball player and Noah is an early childhood education major.

During October, SIDS Awareness Month, D’Tanja was among the employees who demonstrated the #ClearTheCrib Challenge which can be viewed on department’s website and appeared on a recent promotion on WSFA-TV.

The Brocks were recognized at a presentation at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts on November 5.

APRIL 2024

ALABAMA’S HEALTH 9

RESOURCES PROMOTED AT SELMA DAY OF ACTION

Public health programs were well represented at the WSFA Day of Action February 2 at the Selma High School gym.



**Deborah Ellis, Dallas County Health Department and
Barbara Shoemaker, Choctaw County Health Department**



**Public Health Educator Savannah Robinson of the
Immunization Division**



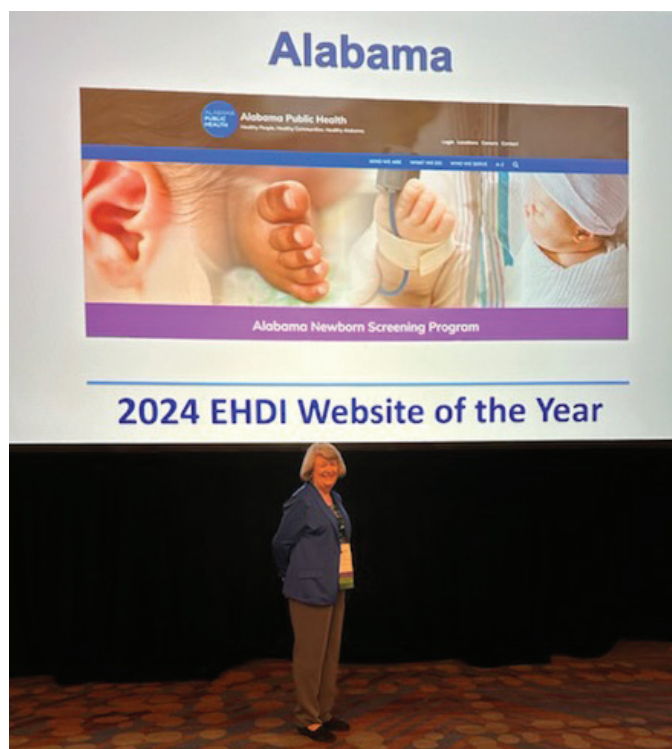
**Outreach Coordinator Linda Hayes of the Alabama Breast and
Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program**

EHDI WEBSITE OF THE YEAR WINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The Alabama Newborn Screening Follow-up Division with the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL) was awarded the 2024 Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Website of the Year at the recent National EHDI Conference, March 17-19, in Denver, Colorado. Award criteria include content, ease of use, and appearance.

The National EHDI Conference is held annually and provides stakeholders an opportunity to identify areas of concern, promote collaboration, and share best practices. State EHDI program staff members, audiologists, physicians, families of children with hearing loss, speech-language pathologists, and other advocates and professionals attend the National EHDI Conference each year. All states and territories are represented at the conference.

Mary Ellen Whigham, Alabama's EHDI Coordinator, is shown accepting the award on behalf of the Alabama EHDI Program. Rachael Montgomery of the BCL worked with Mary Ellen Whigham to supply the content, and Jennifer Allen and Blu Gilliland of the Digital Media Branch, Health Media and Communications Division, worked on website design.



Mary Ellen Whigham is shown

COOSA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT HOLDS OPEN HOUSE

The people of Coosa County now have improved access to public health services. In October 2017, the department had to close the Coosa County Health Department facility in Rockford for budgetary reasons, leaving Coosa as the only Alabama county without a local health department. In the interim, however, services continued to be provided to county residents by employees from neighboring county health departments.

The doors to the facility were reopened in February 2022. An open house was held November 30 for the public to see improvements and meet with the staff at the modern Rockford facility, which is a collaboration between the Coosa County Health Department and a federally qualified health center (FQHC) operated by AltaPointe and Accordia Health.

At the open house, State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris said, "I am very appreciative of all the effort that went into making today possible. I appreciate the partnership with AltaPointe and Accordia Health. I am glad that we have a presence again in Coosa County and are able to provide services to the citizens. This central location is more convenient for everyone

in this area, and is especially important for older adults and low-income residents. We are here to stay."

Tim Hatch, administrator of the East Central Public Health District, agreed that AltaPointe/Accordia Health is a great partner for providing health services in rural Coosa County.

Alabama Department of Public Health staff work alongside the FQHC outpatient staff at the Rockford facility, offering services from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Staff in various public health disciplines operate from this site and offer clinics to the public including WIC, immunizations, family health, STD and TB clinics. All environmental health needs now are handled within Coosa County. A full-time employee also provides birth, death, marriage and divorce certificates from this location.

"The dream of having a health department in every county in Alabama is again a reality," Ricky Elliott, director of Field Operations, said. "Tim and his team have been working tirelessly for almost two years to reach this point. They have formed new partnerships and networked with local and state partners to make this possible."

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH CELEBRATED

Departmental leaders gathered March 27 to Celebrate International Women's Month. Women serve Alabama residents as bureau and office directors at the department. Women in leadership within the department bring a diverse perspective, enhance decision making, increase productivity, and promote better overall outcomes. Some women leaders shown, first row, are Dr. Amber Clark-Brown, Medical Officer, Bureaus of Health Provider Standards and Home and Community Services; Sharon Jordan, Director, Office of HIV Prevention and Care; Dr. Karen Landers, Chief Medical Officer; Dr. Sharon Massingale, Director, Bureau of Clinical Laboratories; top row, Denise Milledge, Director, Bureau of Health Provider Standards; Amanda Martin, Director, Bureau of Family Health Services; Danita Rose, Employee Relations Officer/EEO Coordinator; Debra Thrash, Director, Office of Program Integrity; Choona Lang, Director, Bureau of Home and Community Services; and Shaundra Morris, Director, Bureau of Financial Services.



LATISHA KENNEBREW CHOSEN FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Latisha Kennebrew, Director of the Office of Health Equity and Minority Health, is among 15 public sector leaders from across the country who were competitively selected for the second class of the Equity Changemakers Institute.

This leadership development program, led by CHCS, aims to bolster the capacity of public sector leaders who oversee state-led initiatives to advance health equity for millions of people.

“An increasing number of public sector leaders are responsible for promoting health equity efforts within their agencies,” said Allison Hamblin, MSPH, president and CEO, CHCS. “By investing in leadership development and a peer network for these officials, we are creating long-term opportunities for delivering more equitable services in communities nationwide.”

The *Equity Changemakers Institute* will help participants strengthen the skills to drive transformational change and positively impact the health of those who live in their states. Individuals chosen to join the *Equity Changemakers Institute* Class of 2024 represent 12 states and bring a wide range of professional and lived experience to their work.

The cohort includes other participants from Washington State, Massachusetts, Kentucky, Vermont, Colorado, Idaho, California, New York, Oregon and Tennessee.

“There is growing momentum around the nation to create policies and programs that provide a fair and just opportunity for everyone to be as healthy as possible,” said Mark Larson, senior vice president at CHCS and former Vermont Medicaid director. “We are excited to support this cohort of public sector leaders, whose efforts to advance necessary change will continue to positively impact individuals, families, and communities with diverse identities.”

During the year-long program, participants will gain skills and competencies for effective leadership; engage in individual and group coaching sessions; develop a Leadership Action Plan; and connect with peers to forge long-term support networks. For more information about the *Equity Changemakers Institute*, visit chcs.org/project/equity-changemakers-institute.

The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) is a policy design and implementation partner devoted to improving outcomes for people enrolled in Medicaid. CHCS supports partners across sectors and disciplines to make more effective, efficient, and equitable care possible for millions of people across the nation.

GRANT SUPPORTS PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

A representative from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention made a site visit to the Central Office in Montgomery February 5-9. Project Officer Molly McKenna, third from left, is shown with Alaina Robinson, Ken Harrison, and Dyan Hunter of the Office of Human Resources. The Public Health Infrastructure Grant is a groundbreaking investment that supports critical public health infrastructure needs of health departments across the United States. Funding from this 5-year grant helps ensure that every U.S. community has the people, services and systems needed to promote and protect health. The grant creates a foundation for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s public health infrastructure work and provides maximum flexibility so recipients can address their most pressing needs.



NURSE PRACTITIONERS PROVIDE DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Certified registered nurse practitioners now work independently in colposcopy clinics located around the state. Shown, from left, are Neysa Hernandez, Krysta Hood, Stephanie Phillips, DaJuna Tatom, Kelli Hulseley and Deah Huff. Dr. Gary Pugh has trained the senior nurse practitioners to prepare for the American Society of Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology examination. This means Alabama patients with abnormal pap smear results can more easily receive diagnostic care closer to home.



PREPAREDNESS SUMMIT ADDRESSES CASCADING CHALLENGES

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the voice of the country's over 3,300 local health departments, held the 2024 Preparedness Summit from March 25-28 in Cleveland, Ohio. Public health experts, healthcare leaders, and emergency management specialists attended, in-person and virtually, to learn best practices in preparing for and responding to public health emergencies. Session speakers included leaders and officials from the federal, state, and local levels. The Preparedness Summit is the first and longest running national conference on public health preparedness.

This 2024 theme, "Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Management: Aligning to Address Cascading Challenges," provided an opportunity for sectors to come together, align missions, and discover better ways to work as true partners to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.



Tim Hatch, East Central District Administrator; April Mullins, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director; Nicole Hernandez, Hospital Preparedness Program; and Dr. Wes Stubblefield, Medical Officer, Northern and Northeastern Districts; were among 2,800 attendees for this year's meeting.

NORTHERN DISTRICT EMPLOYEES WEAR BLUE FOR CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Day 2024, home health and remote patient monitoring employees throughout the Northern Public Health District dressed in blue. The day and the month of April are designated to show their support of the need to prevent child abuse and neglect, to support child abuse and neglect survivors, and to build strong communities and families where every child can grow up happy and safe.



continued on page 15



HRSA RECOGNIZES MOBILE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S SMARTPHONE APPLICATION

The Mobile County Health Department (MCHD) and Family Health, its primary care division, announced in 2022 the release of a smartphone app called “My MCHD Health Check.” This app has served as a new way for the health department to connect with Mobile County residents and visitors, providing information quickly and efficiently to anyone with a smartphone.

The effort has not gone unnoticed. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) recently featured the software on its Health Center Stories webpage. The section is titled “Free App May Help Lower Blood Pressure in Alabama Patients.”

The article states more than 3,000 people have downloaded the application to access health information, check blood pressure and get dietary suggestions.

The public has certainly taken notice. The app has been downloaded 3,211 times (2,223 on Apple devices and 988 on the Google platform) as of February 16. The next goal is set for 4,500 total downloads by the end of June.

The MCHD app was developed by ThePublicHealthApp.com, a division of OCV. The app offers quick access to items of public interest and is easy to use.

“What began as a way to assist patients with healthy lifestyle tools for lowering high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol through a grant from ADPH five years ago has turned into an agency-wide mobile application that includes restaurant ratings, a Health Center locator map, Overdose Prevention, a connection to download the WIC state app, and a primary care tool,” said Melissa Creighton, Family Health’s grant manager who has played a key role in the project. “The app still contains those tools for healthy lifestyle such as the ‘Talk to a Nutritionist’ button to be automatically connected to an in-house licensed registered nutritionist who can call the patient to set up an in person or virtual appointment.

“Also, the app includes a tool called ‘Blood Pressure Calculator’ to keep and retain blood pressure readings. It gives a handy alert to the user based on the readings. We also have new features planned for the future.”

The Mobile County Health Department app is available for download for free in the App Store and Google Play. Search “My MCHD Health Check” or click the following link to download the app - <https://apps.myocv.com/share/a65536603>. The app can be used in both English and Spanish.

DOWNLOAD THE MCHD APP TODAY

My MCHD Health Check Mobile App

Built by  ThePublicHealthApp.com
CUSTOM APPS



INTRODUCING OUR NEW APP

Navigating critical information has never been **easier**.



SCAN TO DOWNLOAD!



AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD NOW!

By Mark Bryant

LUNG CANCER AWARENESS MONTH PROCLAIMED

Cigarette smoking, radon and secondhand smoke are the leading causes of lung cancer, the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. To focus on the need to reduce risk, Governor Kay Ivey proclaimed November as Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Shown at the proclamation signing are, from left, Kimberly Alexander, ACT Lead, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network; Nicole Lallatin, Grassroots Manager, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network; Kimberly Williams, Senior Program Manager, Tobacco Control, American Cancer Society; Nicole Lovvorn, Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch Director, Bureau of Prevention, Promotion and Support; Governor Ivey; Tonya Gandy, Director, Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, Bureau of Family Health Services; Lakita Hawes, Cancer Prevention Division, Bureau of Family Health Services; and Nick Swindall, Assistant Director, Office of Radiation Control.



REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETS

Kenneth Harrison of the Office of Human Resources and Ryan Easterling of the Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support are pictured in this group photo made at the Region IV Public Health Training Center Steering Committee Meeting in January. The center is at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University.



OPI GIVES GENEROUSLY

The Office of Program Integrity team showed its holiday spirit of service by both sharing their time and attention and delivering dozens of gifts to the residents of Prattville Health and Rehabilitation Facility.



SANTA ARRIVES IN MONTGOMERY

Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus (also known as Dr. and Mrs. Gary Pugh) and their cheerful elves visited the RSA Tower in where they welcomed youngsters to offer their Christmas lists and be photographed with Santa. Parents' donations were made to their preferred charities through the State Combined Campaign. Also participating were employees of other agencies in Montgomery which included the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, the Department of Insurance, and the Department of Senior Services.



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.

Teresa Baniewicz-Paz

Children's Health Insurance Program
from Margarita Gutierrez
Daphne, Ala.
Latisha Kennebrew
Montgomery, Ala.

Georgette Blackmon

Center for Health Statistics
from Morgan McGee
Newton, Ill.

Petria Caldwell

Latisha Kennebrew
Jasmine Poole
Office Health Equity and Minority Health
from Andrew Sewell
Fairfield, Ala.

Cassandra Clark

Center for Health Statistics
from Alberta Pinkins
Bronx, N.Y.

Jasmine Davis

Victoria Norman

Center for Health Statistics
from Judy McCormick
Enterprise, Ala.

Latasha Fair, R.N., M.S.N.

Tim Feuser, M.P.H.

Lindsay Harris, B.S.N., RNC-LRN

Leigh Ann Hollon, R.N.
Antwan Parker, M.P.H.
Beth Shoemaker, R.N.
Bureau of Family Health Services

from Carolyn Miller,
LICSW, PIP
Montgomery, Ala.

Daryl Frazier

Center for Health Statistics
from Regions Bank Staff
RSA Tower
Montgomery, Ala.

Ken Stephens

Bureau of Environmental Services
from Sandra Blakely
Montgomery, Ala.

COFFEE COUNTY WINS SCC COMPETITION, RECEIVES 'PRIZE'

To encourage participation in the State Combined Campaign, a friendly competition was waged among counties in the Southeastern Public Health District. The winning county was to be awarded the opportunity to "pie" their leader in the face with a creamy, dreamy treat.

Coffee County Health Department successfully raised the most donations within the district for the campaign and was awarded the fun prize. On February 14, Southeastern District Response Team Director Sean Sawyer followed through with his promise.

The Southeastern District contributed \$1,953 to the campaign with 60 employees participating this year. Covington and Dale counties both had 100 percent participation among their staff.

District Administrator Corey Kirkland said, "I appreciate the counties supporting the campaign and Sean's willingness to go above and beyond to encourage support."

Nurse Manager Susan Wiggins remarked, "Great job for all those who worked to reach these numbers and to Sean for being such a great sport."

The State Combined Campaign provides state employees the opportunity to contribute to a multitude of charities through payroll deduction.



Sean Sawyer, District Response Team Director, demonstrates his support of the State Combined Campaign by being "pied" in the face. He is shown with Brandy Powers whose expression is priceless as she represents Coffee County and delivers the pie!

CALENDAR



**APRIL 18, NOON-1 P.M.
(CENTRAL TIME)**

Vaping: An Emerging Threat to Pediatric Lung Health

For more information, contact the Health Media and Communications Division, (334) 206-5635.

DR. BURNESTINE TAYLOR ADDRESSES NURSE PRACTITIONER ALLIANCE OF ALABAMA

The 17th Annual Conference of the Nurse Practitioners Alliance of Alabama featured Dr. Burnestine Taylor, M.D., Medical Officer for Disease Control and Prevention. The conference theme was "Together WE CARE: Empowering NPs and Their Communities" and whose focus was to enhance

and explore knowledge among Alabama nurse practitioners, academics, and industry personnel dealing with treatment plans, new medicines, hands-on workshops and an exchange of ideas. Dr. Taylor's address on November 10 was titled "State of the State Post COVID."



Burnestine Taylor, M.D.



East Central Public Health District nurse practitioners attending the state conference were, pictured from left, Latoria Bass, Joe Rightmyer and Shelley Moore.

ADPH AND CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING HOLD ELC GRANT ANNUAL MEETING

The 2024 Annual Meeting for Centers for Independent Living (CILs) was held on February 6 at the ADPH Administrative Annex and Training Center in Prattville. The meeting was presented as part of the ELC Grant to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, specifically addressing the needs of individuals with functional and access needs.

Dr. Graham Sisson, Executive Director of the Governor's Office on Disability, spoke on advocacy and gave legislative

updates. Dr. Amber Clark-Brown, Medical Director for the Bureau of Health Provider Standards and the Bureau of Home and Community Services, led discussion on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and how to prepare today for the next epidemic. Ashley McLeroy, Director for Alabama AT Act Program, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, spoke on COVID's effect on health and how assistive technology addressed these issues. All four CILs, which collectively serve all counties in Alabama, were represented.