

Department Responds to Devastating April 27 Tornadoes

Some have called the date of April 27, 2011, Alabama's 9/11 because of the massive destruction and enormous loss of life experienced in a single day. A series of violent tornadoes killed more than 230 people, injured more than 1,500, and left a wave of horrific destruction and loss that will not easily be forgotten as the state recovers in the months and years to come.

Immediately following the storm, Children's Hospital of Alabama reported it treated more injured children at one time than ever before. Other hospitals reported high numbers of trauma patients in addition to less severe injuries, but the health care system held strong.

The number of twisters, their severity and their geographic dispersion was unprecedented in Alabama. The National Weather Service estimates there were 62 tornadoes coursing through both small and large communities in the state. Some stayed on the ground for as far as 60 miles. According to the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, six EF-3 tornadoes, eight EF-4 tornadoes and two EF-5 tornadoes have been confirmed so far. As a result of this disastrous day's events and earlier destructive storms during April, 43 of Alabama's 67 counties have been declared federal disaster areas.

Some Alabama Department of Public Health employees sustained injuries and property losses, a number of family members of employees and patients perished, but no employees



Dr. Karen Landers, health officer for Public Health Area 1, meets with tornado survivors in Franklin County.

were killed and no health department structures were severely damaged. Power outages were experienced in large sections of the state, often for several days.

Early in the day of April 27 the ADPH external liaison began staffing the state emergency operations center in Clanton. Personnel were assigned responsibility for situation management, including monitoring the needs of hospitals and health care facilities statewide. Some Area 1 staff members were deployed to Russellville Hospital to assist with triage and treatment. The Video Communications Division assisted Gov. Robert Bentley by broadcasting news conferences by satellite.

Responding to the magnitude of the random tornadoes occurring in

different parts of the state on the same day was a great challenge. For example, mortuary trailers had to be dispatched to different counties at the same time. In some areas, satellite phones and ham radios were the only means of communication for a time.

A departmental culture of responding to emergencies is such that employees understand that disaster response is a part of their jobs, and they want to do everything they can possibly do to help. Employees themselves do not see their actions as anything extraordinary.

These are some examples. Even though he resides in another county Sam LeMaster responded to his concerns about the condition and safety of the citizens of Marion County. Amy Baker,

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CDC Identifies 10 Public Health Achievements of First Decade of 21st Century

Hundreds of thousands of lives and billions of dollars saved, much more possible

The major public health achievements of the first 10 years of the 21st century included improvements in vaccine-preventable and infectious diseases, reductions in deaths from certain chronic diseases, declines in deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes, and more, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The 10 domestic public health achievements are published in the May 20 issue of CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).

One of the major findings in the report is that the United States has saved billions of dollars in health care costs as a result of these achievements. For instance, fortifying our foods with folic acid has resulted in a savings of over \$4.6 billion over the past decade, by reducing neural tube defects in children. Continued investments will save more. For example, ensuring that all children are vaccinated with the current schedule could result in a savings of \$20 billion in health care costs over the lifetime of those children. Preventing motor vehicle crashes could save \$99 billion in medical and lost work costs annually and the economic benefit of lowering lead levels among children by preventing lead exposure is estimated at \$213 billion per year.

"Americans are living longer, healthier, and more productive lives than ever before thanks in part to extraordinary achievements in public health over the past decade," said CDC Director Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. "However, we can do much more to protect and promote health. Continued investments in prevention will help us and our children live even longer, healthier and more productive lives while bringing down health care costs."

The accomplishments include:

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

A number of new vaccines were introduced during the first decade of the 21st century. Two of the most significant

were the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, which has prevented an estimated 211,000 serious pneumococcal infections and 13,000 deaths and the rotavirus vaccine, which now prevents an estimated 40,000-60,000 rotavirus hospitalizations each year. Other achievements included record low reported cases of hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and chicken pox. A recent economic analysis indicates that vaccinating each child born in the United States in a given year with the current childhood immunization schedule could prevent approximately 42,000 deaths and 20 million cases of disease.

Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases

The first decade of the 21st century saw a 30 percent reduction in reported tuberculosis cases in the United States and a 58 percent decline in central line-associated bloodstream infections. A central line is a tube that a doctor usually places in a large vein of a patient's neck or chest to give important medical treatment. When not put in correctly or kept clean, central lines can become a freeway for germs to enter the body and cause serious bloodstream infections. These infections can be deadly. Other achievements included improvements in lab techniques and technology that made it easier to identify contaminated foods more rapidly and accurately to help control the spread of foodborne illness outbreaks. Broader HIV screening recommendations led to an increase in the number of people getting earlier HIV diagnosis, which provided them earlier access to life-saving treatment and care. The development of a blood donor test to screen for West Nile Virus has identified an estimated 3,000 potentially infected U.S. blood donations, removing them from the blood supply.

Tobacco Control

The number of states with comprehensive smoke-free laws grew from zero in 2000 to 25 states and D.C. in 2010. In 2009, a new federal cigarette tax took effect, bringing the combined federal and average state excise tax for cigarettes to \$2.21 per pack, an increase of 76

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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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Nurse Supervisor Is a Brave First Responder to the Hackleburg Tornado, Recounts Her Experience

Franklin County Health Department Clinic Supervisor Kim Wooten displayed her determination, dedication and courage in responding to the victims of the EF-5 tornado that almost leveled her town. At least 27 people died. Thirty of the town's 31 businesses were destroyed, 197 buildings were demolished, and another 298 were damaged. This is her own description of how this nurse stepped forward to help her neighbors in a time of great danger and need.

On Wednesday, April 27, 2011, the town of Hackleburg was hit by a tornado around 3:20 p.m. I live in the town, so by 4 p.m. we began to receive text messages telling us that the school, the Piggly Wiggly grocery store and the Wrangler Distribution Plant were destroyed.

We had no power at the time. My husband went up town to see if what we were told was true. He came home almost in tears. He reported, "The town is gone and people are hurt."

I got a blood pressure cuff and stethoscope together and went up to town to help. First, I went to the Piggly Wiggly parking lot to see if everyone had gotten out okay. In this lot was Dr. Morrow's office, Ray's Pharmacy, the grocery store and the Dollar General Store.

I was informed that all wounded had been moved to the First Baptist Church in town for triage, and they sent me there by way of police car. At the church, we triaged patients and sent several more to the emergency room. Some had to go by private vehicle. One patient that was severely injured was carried to the ER by way of the local flower shop van as we could not get enough EMS assistance to the area at that particular time.

All noncritical were sent to the basement of the church to rest and for any other support they needed. After helping with patients, others and I went to the command center located at the parking lot of the Panther Food Mart on Highway 43.

We went in groups of two or three, going "door to door," or areas where we remembered a house to be, looking for any injured. We were instructed to put an X (with spray paint that was handed out to us) somewhere on the rubble if we did not find anyone and put an O if there were any deceased. If there was anyone injured, one person would stay with the injured person and the other had to go back for help.

Cell phones were down as far as calls, occasionally you could text. My partner and I went down Highway 43 (south, toward Hamilton) looking for injured or deceased people.

We found none, but there was so much rubble you could barely move and we had to stop twice as two more tornadoes were reported as being spotted close to the area. I actually jumped in the back of a truck that was parked on Highway 43 just to take cover.

After looking for patients or fatalities, I went back to the church to assist with anything, but by this time many volunteers were there as well as a van load from Keller Hospital. The group from Keller left shortly after arriving, as everyone that we could find that was hurt had been sent on and Keller ER was beginning to get bombarded with patients. I left for home around 9:30 p.m.

Kim Wooten
Franklin County Health Department

Area I Health Officer Dr. Karen Landers and Kim Wooten have worked together many years. Both are veterans of the Labor Day 2008 response to Hurricane Gustav during which Ms. Wooten helped make the shelter for evacuees from New Orleans operational. Both of them provided sick call rounds to the mass care shelter patients.

Dr. Landers commented, "Clearly, Kim's superb nursing skills and compassion helped many patients during the devastation of Hackleburg. She is one of the heroes of this disaster and is a wonderful asset to public health."



Kim Wooten

Helen Norberg of DeKalb County Health Department Honored at White House

On most Friday afternoons Administrative Support Assistant Helen Norberg is working in the Home Health program of the DeKalb County Health Department in Fort Payne.

May 6 was not an ordinary Friday. Thanks to her daughter who nominated her for military family support recognition and First Lady Michelle Obama, Ms. Norberg was at the White House attending a Mother's Day Tea.

Ms. Norberg's daughter Julia is a sergeant who serves in the National Guard and has been deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. During her most recent overseas mission to Iraq, Ms. Norberg's preschool age grandson Isaiah stayed with Ms. Norberg at her home in the small and somewhat isolated community of Mount Vernon.

One life-changing action may have made the difference between life and death for Isaiah. During horrendous tornadoes last year on April 24 and 25, Ms. Norberg gathered pillows and pulled mattresses to cover members of her family who were staying with her at her mobile home. But at 1 a.m. the mobile home was struck and the tornado's power sent her swirling. Her feet and body hit the ceiling, roof and walls as she was brought into the tornado's swirl.

While no one expected a mountainside home to be destroyed, it was. A washing machine landed on her leg and all of the family's belongings were strewn around everywhere. Ms. Norberg valiantly protected her grandson and he only suffered a scratch on his arm.

However, Ms. Norberg sustained a C-2 vertebral fracture in the tornado. While she was being treated at UAB Hospital, neighbors and friends bulldozed the remnants of her mangled mobile home to the side.

Ms. Norberg deeply appreciates the assistance and prayers of her co-workers at the health department after the tornado. "The health department people were so very supportive," she said. "I even received cards from people in Montgomery."

She feels blessed that the outcome was so positive. "My physical therapist was relieved it wasn't a C-3 fracture," Ms. Norberg said. "I was just blessed." After just three months of therapy her back healed and is virtually back to normal.

Now she is in the process of building a new home, with the special feature of an 8-by-8 foot steel enforced storm



Helen Norberg and her daughter, Sgt. Julia E. Norberg, posed for this photograph in the East Room.

shelter in the garage. As no emergency sirens are located nearby, she will be relying on a weather alert radio to warn of tornadoes.

Mother's Day Tea in the East Room

Unbeknownst to Ms. Norberg, Julia had nominated her mother for this special recognition for support of service members, and she was selected. Both mother and her daughter were provided airfare to Washington, D.C., and lodging at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue for three nights.

At the tea in the East Room of the White House Ms. Norberg was one of two honored mothers specifically mentioned by Mrs. Obama. She also was able to meet Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden.

Dr. Biden said, "You are all heroes...the grandparents who step in with much needed support."

In speaking with other honorees at the table at tea, Ms. Norberg tried to emphasize that her trials were minimal compared to those of the hundreds of Alabamians who were injured and killed in Alabama in tornadoes this spring.

In addition, she was pleased to meet actors Brigid Brannagh, Sterling K. Brown and Sally Pressman of the Lifetime Television program "Army Wives" at the tea.

Reflecting on the once-in-a-lifetime experience, Ms. Norberg said, "It was wonderful. I was so blessed and know I will be okay."

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senior environmentalist in Tallapoosa County, lives in Elmore County. After her home was narrowly missed by a mid-April tornado, on April 27 her home was again spared by less than a mile. Concerned for her neighbors, she used annual leave to help others clear trees and debris scattered by the storm. Doubtless, many other selfless acts of kindness were performed.

Pharmacy Division Director Charles Thomas remained busy in the aftermath. At least eight pharmacies were totally destroyed and many more sustained damage in the storm. To assist patients who had lost access to their prescription medications and for those unable to purchase new prescription drugs, a voucher program for pharmaceuticals was implemented for impacted areas. Maury West, director of the Social Work Division, and Stephan Mambazo, Emergency Preparedness social worker with the division, assisted with this as well.

The Alabama Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) reached out to participants who might not have been eligible for services prior to the storms.

Central Office staff worked to develop health messages appropriate to the situations occurring. Dr. Mary McIntyre, Medical Officer of the Bureau of Communicable Disease, and Immunization staff researched and made recommendations about the use of Tetanus Immune Globulin which were sent as guidance to health care providers. For example, Environmental Toxicologist John Guarisco and others issued guidance about airborne asbestos and other hazards.

“Everyone worked together to get things done that none of us could have done alone,” Dr. McIntyre said.

Planning and Training Pay Off After EOC Collapses in Tuscaloosa

The existence of a disaster plan and plenty of training facilitated a quick and effective state response to the massive storm damage. Ironically, on April 21 and 22 Public Health Area 3 Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Tommy Dockery had attended a Threat/Risk Assessment class in the Emergency Operations Center at the Curry Building in Tuscaloosa. The simulated incident they practiced in class was that of a tornado hitting the EOC. In working through the scenario, his work group listed the 18-inch concrete ceiling as a positive for survival.

The next Wednesday the tornado predictions brought Dockery back to the EOC in the Curry Building where he was among the first to see a tornado from the basement bunker that housed Tuscaloosa’s emergency response equipment and personnel. They were tracking tornado



Approximately 28 mass care shelters were opened in the state. Public Health Area 1 Health Officer Dr. Karen Landers is shown at one in Franklin County.

activity with video cameras and radar, and issuing warnings. At 5 p.m. one of the cameras caught a massive tornado nearby, and then two minutes later there was a loud boom and the power went out.

“The whole building came crashing down on top of us,” Dockery stated in an interview with the Los Angeles Times. He explained that the dozen or so people there used axes, picks and crowbars to dig themselves out in the dark. Even though all of their vehicles were destroyed, no one was injured. As they had determined in their training exercise, the steel-and-concrete fortified basement helped save their lives.

EMS Delivers Organized Response on April 27

A preliminary report indicates that tornadoes began in the predawn hours in Waterloo in Lauderdale County, at least 56 more were located, and finally concluded at 9:50 p.m. in Verbena in Chilton County.

EMS Director Dennis Blair stated, “During this event, our office sent only 23 ambulances to affected areas in Alabama. This indicates a well-organized EMS response. While no one can adequately prepare for such a wide-range disaster, I feel EMS was ready and the professional response saved countless lives.”

In thanking EMS providers for their dedication and sacrifice, he said, “I hope we never see this type of event again. If and when we do, I know we will be ready.”

Environmentalists Work to Protect Food and Water Safety in Storm Response

Power outages in much of the state necessitated warnings to both the public and food service establishments to caution them about safe disposal of spoiled food. In the aftermath of the tornadoes, public health environmentalists in areas 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 made 1,154 visits to food service establishments, issued 12 emergency orders, oversaw

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35 voluntary closures based on their visits and issued 22 Stop/Sell/Seize and Hold orders. A total of 82 visits were made to shelters and other non-permitted facilities and 246 additional activities related to storm response were performed.

These totals do not include a variety of general response activities such as phone calls related to boil water notices issued by water authorities.



Public Health Area 9 team (left to right) members shown are Josh Coleman, David Kelly, Jessica Wade, Kimberly Gordon, Selena Dreadin, Kelly Singleton, Dnene Johnson, Audra Wilson, and Peggy J. Roberts, Charlotte Detlefsen, Suzanne Terrell, Lynne Noah, Renae Carpenter, Teresa Banks, Mary Ann Pugh and Shirley Singleton.

Holding Tank Requirements Suspended

The severity of the storms and widespread damage resulted in a large number of Alabamians without homes. The state's onsite sewage and treatment disposal rules provide for natural disasters and authorize the suspension of certain rules "for specifically affected persons, sites or conditions, and may institute a provisional regulatory plan until the disaster is abated."

The Bureau of Environmental Services developed a plan to deal with the existing damaged systems to allow homeowners to use an above ground tank to dispose of the onsite wastewater. In these situations, an Application For A Permit To Install (Repair) is required along with a copy of a sewage pumping contract with a licensed pumper and verification that the pumper retains possession and responsibility for the tank. The tank is to be inspected on a weekly basis or as needed and pumped as needed. Permits to Install and Approvals For Use expire one year from the issuance date.

In Jefferson County, environmental field staff began assessing areas with power outages the day after the storms. An estimated 950 permitted facilities were without power. The storms caused significant damage to the water supply including ruptured water supply lines, and loss of power which resulted in loss of pressure in some areas.

This combination of factors introduced a threat of potential contamination of some water supplies.

Environmentalists also made 11 food safety assessments at mass care shelters. In Jefferson County alone there were 124 permitted facilities affected by boil water notices, 210 facilities with documented visits for assessment, 15 notices of violations issued to cease/restrict operations due to power or water, and 173 facilities documented as voluntarily closed or with restricted operations. Fourteen food and three lodging facilities were damaged or destroyed causing extended closure, and, sadly, two fatalities were associated with permitted facilities.

Medical Needs Shelter Experiences Pull Public Health Family Together

A public health responsibility is to staff medical needs shelters. Many more shelter teams asked for the opportunity to be deployed than were needed. One of the Public Health Area 9 team members who was deployed to Tuscaloosa was Suzanne Terrell, L.G.S.W., social work manager with the Clarke County Health Department. She made the following comment about her experience.

"I think while the disaster was complete devastation, overall, it was a very positive experience for those of us responding. We were able to respond and work with others we often don't get a chance to work with side by side. Being deployed to situations such as these pull us closer together as a public health family. We are able to help the citizens of Alabama in need, but at the same time they touch us. We laughed and cried with patients. You can always look back at these times and remember what public health is all about. No disaster I have ever responded to has ever been the same, but I am always touched and my life is changed by each one of them in a positive way."

Ms. Terrell said, "People always say 'You must be crazy to want to go work long hours and sleep on a cot!' That response always makes me smile. I guess it's something you can't understand until you have been there. There is no other experience like it in the world. For those of us who were able to respond several times we knew this going into it...for those going for the first time, they know it now...and for those who have never been...I hope they get that experience and can enjoy knowing what a difference they can and have made in the life of someone else while being touched themselves at the same time."

Smiles...For a Few Moments

Two teams from Public Health Area 10 answered the call on April 28 to staff a medical needs shelter in DeKalb County at a school in Henager. Team members could empathize

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with the shelter residents because of their experiences after the devastating EF4 tornado in Enterprise in March 2007 which killed eight students and destroyed the high school.

After arriving their first two patients were an elderly mother and her daughter; both were oxygen dependent, Lesa Smith, area emergency preparedness coordinator, said.

“As we were talking with them the mother stated they were friends with Elvis and offered to show me a picture of us with them. Thinking she might be senile or confused, I was prepared to respond politely as she dug in her purse several moments trying to locate the pictures. She finally located two pictures that she must carry around with her everywhere. One was of her, and one of her daughter, both hugging a young Elvis in his early twenties.

“For awhile they were able to get away from the horror of losing everything and having to stay in a shelter. For a few moments they had smiles on their faces. We gave them the basic needs of life: food, shelter, water and oxygen. In return they gave us stories of Elvis and the memories of better days gone by.”

“We were all humbled by this experience and wish that we could have done more. Helping those in need; that is what public health is all about.”

Administrators View Impacted Areas

State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson, Assistant State Health Officer Dr. Tom Miller and Center for Emergency Preparedness Director Andy Mullins made several trips to areas impacted by the tornadoes and noted the caring actions of public health workers amid the devastation.

Upon reflection, it seems that each disaster brings new needs to light, such as the following observations.

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Emergency Preparedness Administrator David Schultz of Mobile staffed the Emergency Operations Center at the Alabama Fire College in Tuscaloosa.



At the time of the tornado's impact, EP Coordinator Tommy Dockery was in this building.



The Public Health Area 10 team is shown with Mary Gomillion, Public Health Area 5 and 6 administrator.



The Public Health Area 7 team is pictured with some staff from Public Health Area 9 at the Medical Needs Shelter location.



'Neither rain, nor storms, nor dark of night' deterred this nurse/clinic team from Public Health Area 2 from providing a tetanus clinic for disaster workers in the rain on May 3.

Farmers Market in Dallas County Increases Access to Healthier Foods Through System Changes, Enhancements and Partnerships

In a state where less than 10 percent of residents consume an adequate amount of fruit and vegetables each day, the Strategic Alliance for Health Community of Selma in Dallas County is demonstrating that system changes, enhancements and partnerships can combine to increase access to healthier foods at the Dallas County Farmers Market.

The five-year Alabama Strategic Alliance for Health is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Strategic Alliance for Health communities seek to improve community health through sustainable, innovative and evidence-based community health promotion and chronic disease prevention interventions that promote policy, systems and environmental changes.

To do this, Strategic Alliance for Health communities focus on building local capacity to institute policy, systems and environmental changes related to promoting physical activity and nutrition and reducing tobacco use and exposure; improving and increasing access to quality care; helping eliminate racial/ethnic and socioeconomic health disparities; and reducing complications from and incidence of heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

Alabama Strategic Alliance for Health has contracted with the nonprofit Vaughan Community Health Services, Inc., (VCHS) to help implement these interventions in Dallas County. The primary purpose of VCHS is to improve the health status of the residents of Selma and Dallas County through education and preventive interventions.

According to the State Indicator Report on Fruits & Vegetables, 2009, (CDC) Alabama is one of four states where less than 10 percent of the population consumes fruit two or more times a day and vegetables three or more times a day. Additionally, approximately 38 percent of the county's population receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. Increasing access to healthier foods through system changes and physical enhancements in a Farmers Market will positively impact this problem and the implication of this evidence-based intervention is that it will increase access to healthier foods for approximately 42,000 or more residents.

Dallas County has one Farmers Market recognized by the Alabama Farmers Market Authority and it is located in the City of Selma, adjacent to Valley Creek Park. This area is one of high traffic as the park is also the location of a city playground, football stadium, track, and baseball field. The market is located along a highly traveled state highway and



is housed under a metal pavilion. The Selma/Dallas County Farmers Market pavilion was built in approximately 1979 as a joint use project of both the county and city. Dallas County deeded its portion of the pavilion to the city of Selma due to maintenance concerns since Bloch Park/Valley Creek Park were city funded, managed and owned properties.

Through partnerships with the Alabama Farmers Market Authority, City of Selma, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and local farmers, the Dallas County Farmers Market has incorporated significant system and environmental changes which are as follows:

- Accepting electronic methods of payment, including debit, credit and SNAP benefits;
- Improving the facility's physical appearance;
- Adding signage visible from road; and
- Extending the months of operation.

Local newspaper coverage has promoted these changes throughout the community.

In conjunction with the rehabilitation of the physical structure, increasing accessibility by extending the months the market is open has taken place. It was open June to October, and now it is open from early May through December. This is to capture the consumers interested in strawberries and early spring fruits and vegetables, and continue through the last week in December for sweet potatoes, greens, squash, turnips and winter vegetables. There is a volunteer manager and co-manager in place. There is advertising and tighter controls by the city Parks and Recreation Department to assure that needed repairs are completed quickly and that the area is cleaned prior to each market day.

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- The demonstrated necessity of making tetanus shots available to individuals exposed to debris after tornadoes, not only at health departments but in the field.
- The need to make provisions for persons on oxygen concentrators and plans for individuals undergoing dialysis after power outages.
- The recognition that schools should be closed when tornadoes are predicted.

In the future, plans are to address health and safety issues including establishing the best locations to shelter people. Emergency preparedness messages may include the need for children and adults to wear bicycle helmets during tornadoes to help prevent head trauma.

Among the many employees who have been especially singled out during recent emergency events are the following:

Jason Azbell
Summer Beard
Jeff Black
Mike Boggan
Elizabeth Foster
Gary Hodge
Chris Jackson
Sam LeMaster

Evan Long
Jamie Medley
Matt Patton
Chuck Rhodes
Matt Warner
Public Health Area 1

Ann Blackmon
Jeff Chism
B.J. Diltz
Tracy Elmore
Carolyn Frierson
Randy Northam
Mike Simpson
Shernay Wells
Rhonda Williams
Public Health Area 3

Lem Burell
Vaughan Fleming
Mark Hendrix
Bridgette Key
Misty Markham
Stanford Miller
Angela C. Reams
Bobby S. White
Public Health Area 6

Linda Childers
Denice Clark
Burton Fisher
Malcolm Givhan
Elizabeth Hopkins
Machelle Jackson
Betty Jowers
Tina Norwood

Elvira Phillips
Natalie Quinney
Donna Rhone
Sarah Smith
John Strother
Kristy Wilkinson
Steve Wood
Daniel Wismulek
Public Health Area 7

Teresa Banks
Rena Carpenter
Josh Coleman
Charlotte Detlefsen
Selena Dreading
Kimberly Gordon
Dnene Johnson
David Kelly
Lynne Noah
Mary Ann Pugh
Peggy J. Roberts
Kelly Singleton
Shirley Singleton
Suzanne Terrell
Jessica Wade
Audra Wilson
Public Health Area 9

Ron Dawsey
Mark Sestak
Thad Pittman
Stephen McDaniel
Environmental Administrative
Assistants
Central Office

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cents per pack since 2000. By 2010, FDA had banned flavored cigarettes, established restrictions on youth access to tobacco products, and proposed larger, more effective graphic warning labels. Smoking still results in an economic burden, including medical costs and lost productivity, of approximately \$193 billion per year.

Maternal and Infant Health

The past decade has seen significant reductions in babies born with birth defects such as spina bifida. This is due largely to folic acid fortification of cereal grain products in the United States as well as public health campaigns encouraging women of childbearing age to make sure they get the recommended amounts of folic acid. These efforts have led to a 36 percent reduction in babies born with neural tube defects.

Motor Vehicle Safety

From 2000 to 2009, the death rate related to motor vehicle travel went from 14.9 per 100,000 people to 11 per 100,000. The injury rate fell from 1,130 per 100,000 people to 722. The decade also saw a decline of 49 percent in pedestrian deaths among children, and a 58 percent decline in the number of bicyclist deaths. These achievements are likely the result of improved safety of vehicles and roadways, and safer behavior on the part of both motorists and pedestrians as a result of strong seat belt, child safety seat and other regulations.

Cardiovascular Disease Prevention

Heart disease and stroke are still among the nation's leading killers. However, deaths from both diseases have declined over the past decade, continuing a trend that began in the early 1900s for stroke and the 1960s

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Mother's Room in RSA Tower Provides Opportunities for Breastfeeding

"Cozy and convenient" are among the positive adjectives Savannah Mehren of the Injury Prevention Branch uses to describe the Mother's Room on the 13th Floor of the RSA Tower. Her daughter Olivia Ann is now 10 months old.

For several years the Mother's Room has offered a quiet, private space for breastfeeding mothers, which promotes a breastfeeding friendly environment for mothers who work in the building.

An added plus is that State Lactation Coordinator Michell Grainger of the Bureau of Family Health Services is available to answer questions.

"New mothers are encouraged to continue breastfeeding their infants after returning to work," Ms. Grainger said. "The Mother's Room helps them achieve their breastfeeding goals."

The Mother's Room features comfortable chairs, a breast pump (mothers bring their own attachments that may be provided to them at the hospital), and a small refrigerator for storing milk. The room also has a bulletin board featuring photographs of the many adorable babies whose mothers use or have previously used the room.

For more information about breastfeeding and its many benefits or the Mother's Room, please contact Michell Grainger, michell.grainger@adph.state.al.us, (334) 206-2921.

CDC Recognizes Alabama Cancer Registry

The Alabama Statewide Cancer Registry (ASCR) received a certificate for quality, completeness and timeliness in its 2011 data submission to National Program of Cancer Registries of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

National Program for Cancer Registries (NPCR) certification was established in 2010, although data have been submitted for a number of years. Not all state cancer registries can meet all three standards. This is the ASCR's second consecutive year to meet all three standards.

Certification standards were met for the following:

- Advanced National Data Quality and Completeness Program.

- National Data Quality and Completeness Program.
- USCS Publication Standard.

The ASCR is a statewide, population-based cancer registry which collects data on all cancer cases diagnosed or treated in Alabama. The registry was established in 1995 by the Alabama Department of Public Health in response to a state law (Act 95-275) that made cancer a reportable condition. Data collection began on Jan. 1, 1996.

NPCR provided funding, guidance, and program standards for state cancer registries throughout the U.S. In recognition of the ASCR's achievements, Alabama's cancer data is included in the United States Cancer Statistics report.

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Excerpts From The Transcript Of The First Lady's Remarks

And then there's Helen Norberg and her daughter Julia. They know a thing or two about what I'm talking about. When Julia had to deploy to Iraq, Helen was there every day to help take care of their 3-year-old grandson Isaiah. She enrolled him in gymnastics, probably just to settle him down. She took him to his first dentist appointment. And since the only time Julia and Isaiah could speak was during the day, Helen would often leave work, drive to Isaiah's school with her cell phone, just so he could hear his mom's voice.

And then, last year as Julia's deployment was coming to an end, Helen's house was destroyed by a tornado. Helen jumped on top of Isaiah to protect him. She broke two

vertebrae in her back. When the storm died down, Isaiah had nothing but a small scratch on his arm. And as Julia said, she has been the best grandmother and mother any soldier could ask for.

We believe that this is what you deserve from us, because showing our gratitude to those who serve our nation whether it's on the battlefield or at home, is something that every single American can do. And it's something that every single American should do.

So, to everyone here, I just want to say thank you. This is a very small way to say thank you. Thank you for your strength, your commitment. Thank you for setting an example for the rest of us. It has been such a pleasure getting to meet all of you.

Weight Watchers® at Work Available at Half Price

For Martha Sparks, a guidance counselor with Madison City Schools, Weight Watchers® at Work has helped her lose and sustain a healthy weight loss of 31 pounds for the past two years.

“Even though I have met my goal, it never hurts to hear the message again and to be accountable and aware of what I’m eating,” Ms. Sparks said. “That means eating one cookie instead of 10 and not eating that third and fourth piece of pizza.”

Weight Watchers is available at half price to State Employees’ Health Insurance Plan and Public Education Employees Health Insurance Plan members and their dependents. Approved members will pay \$85 (approximately half price) for a 15-week session, provided the member attends at least 12 of the 15 meetings.

The PointsPlus™ program addresses the issues that have always worked against weight loss such as hunger, temptation, or just a bad day. Participants learn to choose foods that keep them full longer, so that they do not eat for the wrong reasons. This helps them lose weight and keep it off. Meetings can be set up at worksites for convenience. To hold a class on-site, at least 15 participants are required. If the required minimum number of participants cannot be enrolled, Weight Watchers will gladly place PEEHIP members in a local meeting.

“We have the most awesome leader who is very supportive,” Ms. Sparks said emphatically. “She encourages us to step outside our little square box, try new foods, or new ways of cooking an old recipe.”

In addition to eating a healthful diet to maintain her weight loss, Ms. Sparks and her son regularly walk early in

the morning so they won’t fall back on the excuses of being “too tired” or having too many other things to do. Exercise is very important to maintain a healthy weight.

Ready to join?

If your telephone area code is 205 or 256 contact Amy Caldwell at (334) 206-7943 or email her at amy.caldwell@adph.state.al.us.

If your phone area code is 334 or 251 contact Matt James at (334) 206-5588 or email him at matthew.james@adph.state.al.us.

You may also call toll free at 1-800-252-1818.

*A BMI of 25 or above is required for eligibility. Visit www.consumer.gov/weightloss/bmi.html to calculate your BMI. Weight Watchers® is a registered trademark of Weight Watchers® International Inc. All rights reserved.

Employees Celebrate National Employee Health and Fitness Day

National Employee Health and Fitness Day is a national health observance, created to promote the benefits of physical activity for individuals through their work site health promotion activities. In observance of the day, the

Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, the Governor’s Commission on Physical Fitness, and the Alabama Sports Festival sponsored a one-mile walk around the State Capitol Building on April 29.



Sherri L. Davidson of the Epidemiology Division smiles after finishing the mile-long course.

Sumter County Holds Prostate Cancer Screening Event on Public Health Day

Public Health Day was celebrated on Saturday, April 2, at the Sumter County Health Department in Livingston from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free prostate cancer screenings were provided to men by Urology Centers of Alabama, the Urology Health Foundation, Health and Wellness Education Center, and the Sumter County Health Department.

A record-breaking single day total of 168 men were screened for prostate cancer. Two urologists, Dr. Thomas E. Moody and Dr. Tom Holley, Urology Centers of Alabama; the Urology Health Foundation; Health and Education Wellness Center and Sumter County Health Department were involved in the screening process.

Screening for prostate cancer involved drawing blood for PSA that measures the level of protein called prostate specific

antigen in the blood. A physical examination was given to all men to detect prostate cancer. This examination is called DRE or digital rectal examination.

"The examination takes 10 minutes to perform and could save a man's life," Assistant Area Administrator Ashvin Parikh said. Last year 104 men were screened in Sumter County. Four men in the county were diagnosed with prostate cancer through the screening and received follow-up treatment. Area 7 Administrator Jackie Holliday said, "The partnership between the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Urology Health Foundation has improved the quality of life for countless persons in medically under-served areas of Alabama. This partnership is a testament to what can be accomplished when striving toward common goals."

Honorable Mention Goes to Alabama for NDEP Campaign

The Alabama Diabetes Prevention and Control Program was recognized for innovative use and promotion of the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) campaign, "Reaching People Where They Are, For Good Health."

The awards, called the "Frankies," recognize innovative use of NDEP materials and resources as the cornerstone of diabetes prevention and control programs and initiatives, as well as exemplary promotion and

incorporation of NDEP materials and messages into existing programs and activities.

The Frankie Awards are named in honor of Frank Vinicor, MD, MPH, former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Division of Diabetes Translation (DDT) and a founder of the National Diabetes Education Program.

The awards were presented April 11 in Minneapolis, Minn.

The National Diabetes Education Program was established in 1997. The federally funded program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health. It includes more than 200 partners at the federal, state and local levels, working together to improve the treatment and outcomes for people with diabetes, promote early diagnosis, and prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

John Wible Retires

General Counsel John Wible was honored with a large reception May 18 in honor of his retirement after nearly 37 years of service to the Alabama Department of Public Health. Wible led those attending in singing "Happy Trails" as he played his guitar. The State Committee of Public Health also praised his contributions to the department.



State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson presents a retirement certificate to Wible.



Wible leads a farewell song.

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.

Trina Bryan
John W. Davis, Jr.,
Dewana Smith
 Public Health Area 6
from Lem Burell
Anniston, Ala.

Glenda Adams
 Center for
 Health Statistics
from Donald Rollins
Afghanistan

Sandra Daniels
 Center for
 Health Statistics
from Karen Young
Clanton, Ala.

Connie Danner
 Center for
 Health Statistics
from Ann Alverson
Pensacola, Fla.

Aisha Davis
 Baldwin County
 Health Department
from an anonymous client

Janie Gregg, R.N.
Denise Heald, R.N.
Kathy Nichols, R.N.
Kay Steadman, R.N.
 Health Provider Standards
from Gerald Bell
Guntersville, Ala.

Mike Huff
Lee McElvaine
 Bureau of
 Clinical Laboratories
from Jeannine Parker
Montgomery, Ala.

Margaret Huffman, LGSW
 Perry County
 Health Department
from Suzanne L.
Terrell, LGSW
Grove Hill, Ala.

William Kennedy
 Home and
 Community Services
from Judith G. Drew
Montgomery, Ala.

Saundra Levert
 Center for
 Health Statistics
from Donna Cason
Decatur, Ala.

Theresa Mulkey
 Center for
 Health Statistics
from Dianne Daughterty
Cantonment, Fla.

Kathie Peters
 Center for
 Health Statistics
from Jacquelyn Hairston
Tallahassee, Fla.

Geneva Thomas
 Center for
 Health Statistics
from Sung G. Oh
Suwon, Korea
Lorenzo Williams
Stone Mountain, Ga.

Retirees

March

Toni Prater
 Health Promotion
 and Chronic Disease
Lesia Roddam
 Public Health Area 6
Robin Williams
 Randolph County
 Health Department

April

James Byrum
 DeKalb County
 Health Department
Thomasine Choat
 Colbert County
 Health Department
Brenda Dubose
 Family Health Services
Arthur Elmore
 Bureau of
 Clinical Laboratories

Mary Ficzero
 Home and
 Community Services
Leigh Hewes
 Public Health Area 10
Johnny Jackson
 Russell County
 Health Department

Mary Jones
 Washington County
 Health Department
Henry Logan
 Environmental Services
Everlene Nelson
 Butler County
 Health Department

Linda Stinson
 Etowah County
 Health Department
Ron Wheeler
 Public Health Area 10

May

Donna Cole
 Houston County
 Health Department
Una Morris
 Talladega County
 Health Department

Bobbie Packer
 Clay County
 Health Department
Loretta Searcy
 Calhoun County
 Health Department
Laura Seay
 Geneva County
 Health Department
Karen Sullivan
 Public Health Area 5
Jo A. Thomas
 Montgomery County
 Health Department
Gregory Utley
 Public Health Area 3
Patricia Whatley

Center for
 Health Statistics
Janet Wise
 Geneva County
 Health Department

June

Linda Broaddrick
 Public Health Area 1
Freddie Brown
 Bureau of
 Clinical Laboratories

Joyce Driver
 Madison County
 Health Department
Mary Everett
 Washington County
 Health Department
Gwendla Glover
 Health Promotion
 and Chronic Disease

Donna Hydrick
 Calhoun County
 Health Department
Sharon Myers
 Lamar County
 Health Department
Voncile Rogers
 Public Health Area 5
Jeanie Wade
 Walker County
 Health Department

Farmers Market, continued from page 8

Also, through another project, Strategic Alliance for Health has been able to make the farmers market safer through the patrol of the area by the Selma Police Department Segway officers. The police chief has written policy in regard to patrolling the area during farmers market hours and increased use of the market, walking path, and the playground next to the farmers market.

The evaluation of this change strategy focuses on the measurement of increased access to the market by establishing longer months of operation. Additionally, in the past, hours of operation were vague and now they are clearly stated in promotion pieces as being from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

The volunteer manager of the Selma-Dallas County Farmers Market stated, "The rehabilitation, advertising, extended hours, and adherence to rules has definitely improved the number of consumers."

As implementation of this intervention continues, baseline data can be established and measurement can begin to capture increased interest/participation in fresh fruit and vegetable marketing on the part of local farmers and increased interest in buying those products from community residents.

Achievements, continued from page 9

for heart disease. These declines in deaths are mainly due to lower smoking rates as well as improvements in treatment, medications and quality of care, which has led to reductions in major risk factors for heart disease and stroke, such as uncontrolled high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Occupational Safety

The United States has seen significant improvements in working conditions and the risk of workplace-associated injuries during the past decade. Examples of these improvements include patient lifting guidance for U.S. health care workers that has reduced, by 35 percent, back injuries among these workers, a comprehensive childhood agricultural injury prevention initiative, which has resulted in a 56 percent decline in farm injury rates among young people, and reductions in deaths among crab fisherman from overturned fishing vessels as the result of a U.S. Coast Guard initiative to correct stability hazards.

Cancer Prevention

Improvements in screening techniques along with strong cancer screening recommendations have led to improved screening rates and a reduction in deaths of 2–3 percent per year from colorectal, breast and cervical cancer. In addition, the creation of the National Breast and Cervical

Indicators of increased interest/participation from fruit/vegetable growers include changes in the number of vendors over time, requests for additional space by vendors, the number of hours sellers spend at the market selling their products, and their willingness to accept alternative forms of payment for their products (food stamps, WIC coupons, debit cards and credit cards). On the other hand, heightened participation from community residents can be measured by increases in consumer counts, changes in product sales (cash and electronic), and surveys of consumer behavior.

A critical lesson learned from the implementation of this intervention was the impact of having all partners at the initial meeting. This generated momentum for sustainable changes because it created dialogue and avenues of continued communication. This process determined who would take responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the pavilion, the continued promotion of the system changes to the community, and the sustainability of coordinated efforts. Identifying this policy, systems, and environmental change strategy through the community consortium and a community wide assessment allowed partners to successfully plan, organize and implement system changes at the Dallas County Farmers Market.

By Leslie Knox, M.P.A.

Cancer Early Detection Program has reduced disparities by providing breast and cervical cancer screenings to uninsured women.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

By 2010, 23 states had comprehensive lead poisoning prevention laws compared to just five states in 1990. Enforcement of these statutes, along with federal laws that reduce hazards in the highest risk housing, has significantly reduced the prevalence of lead poisoning. The percentage of children aged 1 to 5 years with elevated blood lead levels has declined significantly going from 88.2 percent in 1980 to under 1 percent in 2008.

Improved Public Health Preparedness and Response

There has been much progress made since September 11, 2001, expanding the capacity of the public health system to respond to public health emergencies and disease outbreaks. The first decade of the 21st century also saw improvements in laboratory response for identifying and reporting disease outbreaks. In addition, influenza vaccination, along with other public health measures taken during the 2009 outbreak of H1N1, prevented an estimated 5–10 million cases, 30,000 hospitalizations, and 1,500 deaths. The decade also saw the percentage of state public health agencies that were prepared to use Strategic National

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'Striving for Excellence in Women's Health' Is Theme of Seventh Annual ADPH Nurse Practitioner Conference

On April 7-8 the Bureau of Family Health Services held its Seventh Annual ADPH Nurse Practitioner Conference, "Striving for Excellence in Women's Health."

A half-day meeting/preconference was held at the Montgomery County Health Department Auditorium April 7. Preconference presentations included the following:

- The "gal-Get A Healthy Life" Campaign by Katherine Blaze.
- A new blood pressure tool and the "Power to End Stroke" Campaign by Melanie Rightmyer.
- "Implanon Removals Panel Discussion" with a panel of certified registered nurse practitioners: Ramona Hawkins, Merren Maddox, Joseph Rightmyer, Martha Southern and Patsy Watson.
- "ADPH Protocol Update" by Kitty Norris, Agnes Oberkor and Laurie Stout.

Pamela Moody, Area 3 Nursing Director, was presented a Certificate of Recognition in honor of her achievement of Doctorate of Nursing Practice. This demonstrates her continued contribution to professional development and exhibits her personal commitment to provide exceptional care for the women of Alabama. Dr. Moody exemplifies the motto of "Striving for Excellence in Women's Health."

Attendees assembled April 8 at the Prattville Marriott at Capitol Hill for a



ADPH Family Health Services nurse practitioners from across the state and the Central Office are pictured along with Grace Thomas, M.D., ADPH Medical Director, FHS/Women's Health Division.

well-rounded educational conference and lecture series which included:

- "2011 Pharmacology Update" by Dr. Glenn E. Farr, professor of Clinical Pharmacy, the University of Tennessee;
- "Breast Update 2011" lecture by Dr. Lynn Dyess, professor of surgery and physiology, University of South Alabama College of Medicine;
- "NP Professional Liability Risks" by Jan Hickey, MSN, FNP-BC, ProAssurance;
- "Domestic Violence" by Bridgett Starr, Social Worker, Rape Awareness Campaign Board;

- "Programs and Initiatives to Address the Underserved Women of Alabama," by Elana M. Parker, M.Ed, Health Equity Programs Manager with the Office of Women's Health/Minority Health.

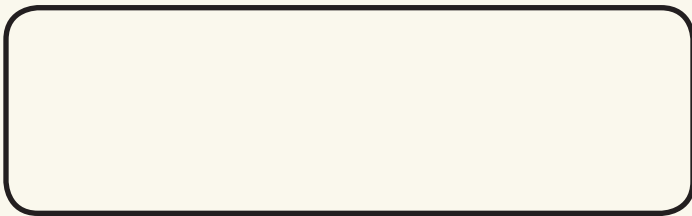
The annual conference, which serves to update and enhance the knowledge of the ADPH nurse practitioners, was attended by 48 Family Health Services nurse practitioners who serve patients in county health departments across the state.

By Elizabeth S. Nichols, C.R.N.P.

Achievements, continued from page 14

Stockpile (SNS) material increasing from 70 percent to 98 percent. SNS has large quantities of medicine and medical supplies to protect the American public if there is a public health emergency (such as terrorist attack, flu outbreak or earthquake) severe enough to cause local supplies to run out.

For more information about the 10 great domestic public health achievements of 2001-2010 visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr.



Environmental Question: Caterer and Leftovers

QUESTION: My daughter is being married in Alabama. The reception will be at a lodge with full kitchen facilities. The caterer has informed us we cannot keep any leftover items we have purchased. Is this correct?

ANSWER: If the food is prepared in an approved food establishment and by a person(s)/caterer that knows how to handle food safely, the food is safe to eat. If the

food is safe to eat and stays at the proper temperature during the event, the caterer should advise you how to transport your food from the facility to home. This can be accomplished by labeling the food containers.

However, if there is a contract that you have signed from the caterer stating that the food should not be removed, discuss this matter further with your caterer.

Calendar of Events



July 13

Recognizing Risk Factors for Falling: Fall Prevention Session One (Home Health Aides and Attendants), 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528.



July 20

Health and Social Issues Impacting Underserved Youth, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact Elana Parker, (334) 206-7980.



July 21

VA Services, 1-2:30 p.m.
For more information contact Maury West, (334) 206-3383.



August 4

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



August 5

ADPH Nurse Practitioners Update, 9-11 a.m.
For more information contact Ramona Hawkins, (205) 221-9775.



August 10

Compliance in Home Care (Home Health Nurses), 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



August 17

Aging Gracefully and Health Care Services for Older Adults, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Elana Parker, (334) 206-7980.



August 24

Enhancing Skills to Address Risk Factors: Fall Prevention Session Two (Home Health Aides and Attendants), 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528.



September 14

Infection Control Update, Home Health Aides and Attendants, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 393-5528.



September 21

Mental Health Issues in Underserved Youth and the Aging Population, 2-4 p.m.
For more information contact Elana Parker, (334) 206-7980.