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Alabama receives second arthritis grant award

Alabama is one of eight states to receive funding in the second round of grants by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to implement and evaluate a state-level program to address the burden of arthritis. The first grant to Alabama was awarded in 1999.

The annual award of \$300,000 is intended to increase efforts to prevent disability and improve the quality of life for people with arthritis. Since arthritis is the number one cause of disability for Americans, it is important to make evidence-based, self-management programs easily available to help people with arthritis better manage their disease.

These self-management programs include: The Arthritis Self-Help Course which involves small group education with problem solving, exercise, relaxation and communication; promoting physical activity to individuals with arthritis using land-based exercise programs such as PACE (People with Arthritis Can Exercise) or water-based programs such as the Arthritis Foundation's Aquatics Program. In addition, Alabama will increase knowledge of ways for people to better manage their arthritis through radio and television announcements and printed materials.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "Arthritis limits the ability of so many Alabamians in leading active lives. Since we have had funding from CDC, arthritis has been incorporated into chronic disease prevention, health promotion and other programs of the state and local health departments. Alabama has been recognized locally as well as nationally for its efforts in addressing the burden of arthritis."

According to the 2001 Alabama Behavioral Risk

Factor Surveillance System:

- Approximately 1.4 million Alabamians or 40.5 percent of Alabama's adult population report that they have arthritis.
- Over 438,000 adults in Alabama with arthritis have limitations in their daily activities.
- Greater than 70 percent of Alabama adults over 65 years of age, or 424,000 persons, have arthritis.
- Over half of Alabamians ages 45 to 64 have arthritis.
- In Alabama, 46 percent of women and 34 percent of men have arthritis.
- An estimated 392,000 obese adults in Alabama have arthritis.
- An estimated 314,000 physically inactive adults in Alabama have arthritis.

In Alabama, a greater prevalence of arthritis exists in groups with lower educational status.

Linda Austin, Alabama's arthritis program director, said, "Alabama has the third highest prevalence of arthritis in the nation. Two major factors in Alabama's high arthritis prevalence rate are obesity and a lack of leisure-time physical activities."

In addition, Alabama has a shortage of facilities and properly trained professionals in arthritis treatment, care, education and rehabilitation in many areas of the state.

"Maintaining an appropriate weight and avoiding occupational or sports-related injuries can help prevent arthritis," Ms. Austin said. "Early diagnosis and medical treatment can reduce disability once arthritis is diagnosed. Alabama's program will concentrate on encouraging

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Model Strategic National Stockpile training helps familiarize pharmacists and others with plans

Several years ago when Pharmacy Director Charles Thomas operated his own pharmacy in the private sector, he developed an emergency plan which he put into action when a tornado destroyed his pharmacy in Huntsville. Other pharmacists were willing to help him restock, and others were amazed when his business reopened in a few days.

But what would happen if a biological or chemical agent were released at an event where thousands of people were gathered such as at an Auburn-Alabama basketball game? To help prepare for situations such as this, more than 300 health professionals attended a Strategic National Stockpile Training and Continuing Education Program June 8 at the Montgomery Civic Center. The Sunday afternoon training session was designed to prepare volunteers to work in mass prophylaxis treatment sites.

The training exercise was planned so that if an event occurs in which the Strategic National Stockpile has to be accessed by the state, pharmacists and other personnel will be familiar with the SNS and how to process it. The Pharmacy Unit prepared and distributed a detailed, clear and specific policy to participants which describes standard procedures to follow in accessing, processing and distributing the stockpile in Alabama. Alabama has designated host sites located in Houston, Jefferson, Madison, Mobile and Montgomery counties, and training

events have been held in these locations.

Frances Kennamer, director of the Office of Professional and Support Services, compared the SNS to an acute care clinic or a mini-pharmacy on site. Pharmacists will need prescriptions, records and follow-up to dispense oral medications from the SNS to prevent infectious diseases in the event of bioterrorism.

“We are relying on nurses and pharmacists to collaborate in triage, dispense antidote medications and provide patient care,” Ms. Kennamer said. “Other volunteers will assist in filling out forms and social workers will help meet the tremendous need for mental health services during such events.”

She noted that representatives from North Carolina and Louisiana were present to observe the training at the Montgomery exercise. Sites have been selected for processing to occur, and this is where the training will take place in five areas of the state.

Charles Thomas, RPh, FAPhA, conducted the training titled “Bioterrorism: Pharmacy and Nursing on the Firing Line.” He pointed out that there already have been events such as salmonella in Oregon and anthrax in Florida, New York and the District of Columbia.

Thomas said that a bioterrorism attack first would be recognized when clinics and hospitals start to see a larger

Stockpile training.....continued on page 3

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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Informational materials in alternative formats will be made available upon request..

Stockpile training.....continued from page 2

than normal number of patients suffering from the same types of symptoms. The U.S. has prepared for a bioterrorism attack by establishing the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile Program. Its mission is to ensure the availability of life-saving pharmaceuticals, antidotes and equipment necessary to counter the effects of biological pathogens and chemical agents. A PUSH package can be deployed any time and anywhere within the U.S. within 12 hours.

Pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and other volunteers met and went through the motions of processing. Tables were set up and all of the conditions that will be present during the actual processing were duplicated except that no drugs were present — only labeled but empty bottles. A continuing education session was also provided to pharmacists and nurses attending the training session.

Continuing education credit was offered to licensed personnel that will include information about handling the SNS.

Objectives of the training included the following:

- List common organisms that may be used in an event.
- Describe treatment options for organisms likely to be used in an event
- Discuss procedures that will be used in processing the SNS.
- Outline the process that will be used to integrate volunteers into the processing procedure
- List important contacts relevant to the SNS
- Describe the process to dispense medication.

The CDC will provide funding for a full-scale exercise involving numerous agencies, and Alabama has applied for such funding.



Hundreds of pharmacists and other professionals attended the mass prophylaxis treatment site intake and counseling demonstration at the Montgomery Civic Center.



Charles Thomas, R.Ph., (left) oversees a dispensing site at the exercise. The station is staffed by a physician, nurse and pharmacist.

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participation in evidence-based, self-help programs and promotion of the CDC health communication campaign, 'Physical Activity. The Arthritis Pain Reliever.' We need to get to people before they get disabled and provide programs that will teach them to manage their disease."

Colleen Cotter, president of the Alabama Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation, commented, "We continue to be committed to doing all we can to reduce the burden of arthritis in our state. Additionally, we look forward to this opportunity to expand our evidence-based self-management programs."

Alabama will continue to expand partnerships through the Alabama Arthritis Prevention and Treatment Coalition, including surveillance activities involving the availability and delivery of evidence-based self-management programs, and coordinating activities statewide.

Renewing Your Lotus Notes Certificate

The Lotus Notes Certificate allows you to access the server that stores your e-mail. Beginning 90 days before your certificate expires, Lotus Notes will provide you with the following warning:

WARNING: Your certificate issued to user's name/Alabama Department of Public Health by /Alabama Department of Public Health will expire on 99/99/99. Request a new certificate by choosing **File - Tools - User ID - Certificate - Request Certificate**.

This warning will continue until your certificate has been successfully renewed.

Important Notes: You should renew your certificate before it expires. It will take more time to renew a certificate after it has expired, and you will not have access to your e-mail during this time. Also, please be sure to mail your request to CSC - Notes Administration. Requests have been forwarded to us from other offices.

To renew your certificate, complete the following steps:

1. Go to **File - Tools - User ID**.
2. A box will pop up for you to enter your password.
3. After, entering your password in the box, another dialog box, called "User ID - Your Name" should appear.
4. Along the left side of the box, there are four SmartIcons. Choose the second icon called "Certificates." Notice that the contents of the right side of dialog box change.
5. In the right portion of the dialog box, next to the Certificates SmartIcon, you will see three buttons. Click on the button marked **Request Certificate**.
6. A new dialog box will appear called "Mail Certificate Request." Be sure there are no names in this box, then click on the button on the right labeled **Address**.
7. After clicking on the **Address** button, a dialog box called "Select Addresses" will pop up allowing you to select the person or group that will receive the request. Make sure that you are looking in **ADPH's Address Book**. Then from the list of names below, find **CSC - Notes Administration** and click on it. Click on the **TO>** button, and verify that **CSC - Notes Administration** did move to the box on the right. Then click **OK**. The "Select Addresses" dialog box should close.
8. On the dialog box called "Mail Certificate Request," click the **Send** button. This will forward your request to Notes Administration

Your request will be processed and you will receive e-mail stating:

/Alabama Department of Public Health has certified the ID belonging to user/Alabama Department of Public Health. The certificate can be merged into your ID file by using the Actions menu "Accept Certificate."

Open the e-mail (**do not open the file attached**) — On the menu bar, click on **Actions — Accept Certificate**— you will be prompted for your password — Type in your password and hit the **Enter** key.

A message will appear on the status bar at the bottom of your screen "The certificate has been inserted into your ID file."

Dr. Fleenor wins UAB honor

Local health officer Dr. Michael Fleenor, of the Jefferson County Department of Health, has been named Alumnus of the Year for the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health. Throughout the years, Dr. Fleenor has remained involved in the life of the school by lecturing in classes, presenting seminars, and encouraging student internships at the health department. In addition, he collaborates with faculty on research projects and serves as a member of the SPH Advisory Board.

In addition to his dedication to the school and to the citizens of Jefferson County, it is recognized that he is currently active in many other organizations including such diverse interests as the American Red Cross, Hand in Paw Pet Therapy and Medical Ethics in Public Health.

One committee member summarized by saying that Dr. Fleenor is someone who "we can proudly stand behind as our choice for Alumnus of the Year; a man who has distinguished himself as a valuable resource from the community who is willing and able to perpetuate excellence in the field of public health through his examples of leadership, research and service."

Yoga offers many benefits for the body and mind

Yoga has been described as a stress-reliever, a fitness craze and a religious experience. The truth is that it can be all those things and more. Yoga has gained more and more popularity over the years and people are finding out that it can offer multiple benefits.

Debbie Tomblin, who has worked in the fitness industry for 18 years, has been teaching yoga for over five years and is certified through International Sports Medicine Association and YogaFit. She is currently teaching yoga at Metro Fitness located in Montgomery, and recently began teaching classes on Tuesdays at the RSA Tower.

According to Tomblin yoga complements other forms of fitness such as weight training or running. It differs from other forms of exercise in how it connects the movement of the body and mind to the rhythm of breath. The use of breathing techniques is particularly beneficial because deep, rhythmic breathing helps calm the mind by controlling anger, stress and emotions.

"The great thing about yoga is that I can feel in a bad mood before I come to class and afterwards it makes me feel so good, so rejuvenated," said Tomblin. "Also it's brought a lot of peace to other parts of my life."

There are many misconceptions about yoga. Many people believe that it is a form of religion, but although the practice does derive from the cultures of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, as the practice migrated into Western culture it transformed from a spiritual discipline into a fitness system. Most yoga classes taught today do not encourage any kind of religious belief system.

Another myth is that a person must be flexible to participate in a yoga class. In fact the opposite is true. Yoga can help people who are not very flexible gain more agility which can then lead to more strength and coordination in their muscles.

"A person should also understand that they're not going to lose 10 pounds in a month. Yoga is not a cardio workout, it's a muscle workout," said Tomblin.



Miriam Gaines, director of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit, was the force that brought yoga to the tower. Gaines was introduced to yoga by public health employees at the clinical lab who were taking yoga classes at Auburn University at Montgomery. They encouraged Gaines to participate in a class.

"I tried it and I was hooked. Since the general interest in yoga was growing and we all loved our class at AUM I wanted to offer it to the tower," said Gaines.

Gaines' instructor at AUM put her in contact with Tomblin who agreed to come and teach

classes at RSA Tower.

"I think we are so fortunate to have leaders at Public Health who allow us the freedom to offer new ideas and programs to our employees," said Gaines.

"I love bringing yoga to people who have never experienced it before," said Tomblin, who was just certified to bring yoga to other environments that may not have experienced the discipline before. "The certification is about stepping out of the health clubs and going into corporate environments and shelters and introducing yoga to those people who would not otherwise have exposure to it."

Please contact Miriam Gaines at 206-5649 for more information.

By TAKENYA STOKES

Follow safety tips to prevent drowning

Summer is a time for families to plan trips to the lake, beach or just stay at home and swim in residential pools. How will you keep yourself and your children safe from drowning during these times?

Alabama ranks sixth in the nation for the highest rate of unintentional drowning. In 2001, 60 people died as a result of drowning. Eighteen percent of these cases were between the ages of 1 and 4; 17 percent between the ages of 5 and 14; and 22 percent between the ages of 15 and 24. Nationwide over 4,000 lives are lost each year due to drowning. That is an average of an estimated nine people per day that die from drowning.

In the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, while drowning rates have been declining slowly over time, it remains the second-leading cause of injury-related death for children ages 1 to 14. The groups who are most at risk are children, males and blacks. Approximately 81 percent of the deaths were males and the overall rate for drowning for blacks was 1.6 times higher than for whites.

In children under age 1 the most common places for drowning to occur are in bathtubs, buckets and even toilets. From ages 1 to 4 the most common place is in residential pools. More than 60 percent of the drownings occur in residential pools.

How can people guard against drowning? To reduce the chances of you or your children becoming victims or near victims of a drowning follow these simple safety tips:

- * Adults should supervise young children at all times when swimming, playing or bathing in or near water.
- * Teach children to always swim with a buddy.
- * Never swim alone or in an unsupervised area.
- * Learn to swim.
- * Do not use air filled swimming aids in place of life jackets with children.

- * Check water depth before swimming. (The American Red Cross recommends 9 feet minimum for diving or jumping.)
- * Keep small children away from buckets containing liquid, especially those larger than five gallons. Be sure to empty buckets when household chores are done.
- * Never drink alcohol during or just before swimming, boating or water skiing.
- * Never drink alcohol while supervising children. Alcohol contributes to about 25-50 percent of all adolescent and adult deaths related to water recreation.
- * Learn CPR.

If you have a swimming pool at your home the Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends the following:

- * Install a fence or other barrier, such as a wall, completely around the pool.
- * The fence or other barrier should be at least four feet high. It should have no foot-or handholds that could help a young child to climb it.
- * Vertical fence slats should be less than four inches apart to prevent a child from squeezing through.
- * Fence gates should be self-closing and self-latching.

The gate should be well maintained to close and latch easily. The latch should be out of a child's reach.

Following these guidelines will help protect you and your family during this summer's swimming season. For more information on drowning prevention go to www.cdc.gov or www.cpsc.gov.

By SAVANNAH HARRIS and MELISSA KHAN

Fire Safety Conference focuses on young children

Preventing fire-related deaths among young children was the goal of the play safe! be safe! Fire Safety Conference held at the Montgomery Civic Center on June 17. Over 350 participants consisting of teachers, firefighters, social workers and nurses came out to learn the best strategies for educating those most at risk for fire-related deaths, children age 5 and under.

“Fireproof Children and the BIC^(r) Corporation are working with the Alabama Department of Public Health to reach young children by bringing this nationally recognized program to Montgomery so that we can work to improve fire safety education in the state of Alabama,” said State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson.

Because young children have a limited capacity when it comes to understanding the danger of fire, the conference focused on topics such as addressing the need of fire education among young children, ensuring effective communication in teaching fire information, making learning fun and easy and teaching specific fire safety skills.

“We need people to go back into their communities and deliver the message about fire safety. Last year we had 78 fire-related deaths. That’s one-third of what was reported to us 30 years ago. We credit people like you who care about fire safety and who do the work of getting fire safety messages out,” said State Fire Marshal John Robinson.

Dr. Robert Cole, President of Fireproof Children and an associate professor at the University of Rochester Medical Center, was the guest speaker for the conference and stated that he wanted to build bridges between people who work with children and the fire safety community teaching fire prevention throughout the year.



“We can’t just talk about fire safety only during fire safety week,” said Dr. Cole who got his start in fire safety education many years ago after

two firefighters from a station in Cambridge, Mass., came to the University of Rochester to ask for help. The firefighters were seeking guidance on how to effectively teach children about fire safety because of a series of fires that occurred in Cambridge started by children.

The university began doing research by surveying 800 students to find out their beliefs about fire, as well as

review national statistical data to develop an incidence report for the fire station. The results found were that the leading cause of death for children ages 3 to 5 was unintentional injuries, with fire-related deaths as the third leading cause of death in the unintentional injury category. Every day children start 235 fires, and fires started by children kill or injure an average of seven people.

“The problem is that fire is a part of our culture and children’s experiences with fire are good and non-threatening. For example candles on a birthday cake, barbecues, fireworks and campfires. So children are very comfortable around fire, but the problem is that they are usually small flames,” said Dr. Cole.

Cole emphasized that parents and teachers can’t just threaten children not to play with fire without giving them reasons why it is so dangerous. The key to effective fire safety education is to teach children so that it affects their behavior. The best teaching method is to tell children what to do to prevent fires instead of what not to do, and then give them positive reinforcement when they do the right thing.

The following are behaviors that play safe! be safe! encourages children to do when they see fire or items that can start a fire:

1. Go tell a firefighter.
2. Stop! Drop! Roll!
3. Crawl under the smoke.
4. Tell a grown up.

Cole also encouraged adults to act more responsibly around children by using lighters with child-restraint mechanisms, have clearly defined rules for fire safety in the home and create exposure to fire safety activities.

In addition to teaching methods, participants were given a kit to aid in teaching fire safety that included a videotape of a fireman instructing children, a teacher’s manual, story cards, activity boards and the Keep Away! card game.

“We had a wonderful turn-out despite inclement weather. Every participant that I spoke with enjoyed the workshop and many asked if the program would be held again next year,” said Amanda Calhoun, coordinator of the fire safety conference and project manager of the Alabama Smoke Alarm Initiative.

For more information about fire safety please contact Amanda Calhoun at 334-206-7063, or visit the Alabama Department of Public Health’s Web site at www.adph.org.

By TAKENYA STOKES

Winning posters, essays promote seat belt usage among youth

The Alabama Department of Public Health announces the winners in its Buckle-Up, Alabama! Traffic Safety poster and essay competitions for 2003. These contests are designed to promote consistent seat belt usage among middle and high school students.

Both contests consist of two levels. Each school held its own contest, selecting first place winners for each grade level from kindergarten through ninth grades. Then winning posters and essays were sent to the state level for judging.

First and second place state-level winners were chosen, with first place winners receiving \$100 U.S. Savings Bonds and second place winners receiving \$50 bonds.

Awards are provided by several businesses and organizations committed to the safety of Alabama's children. These include the Alabama Department of Transportation, Alabama Head Injury Foundation, Alabama SAFE KIDS Coalition, ALFA Insurance, Winn Dixie Supermarkets, the Southeast Child Safety Institute, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Injury Prevention Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Poster contest winners are as follows:

Kindergarten

First: Taylor Howard, Jackson Academy, Jackson, Ala.
Second: Payton Roberson, Mars Hill Bible School, Florence, Ala.
Honorable Mention: Maddy Hickman, Mars Hill Bible School, Florence, Ala.

First Grade

First: Dee Smith, Fairview Elementary School, Cullman, Ala.
Second: Ashley Moody, Mars Hill Bible School, Florence, Ala.
Honorable Mention: Allondra Pettaway, ABC Elementary School, Alberta, Ala.
Mars Hill Bible School, Florence, Ala.
Jake Turner, Monrovia Elementary School, Huntsville, Ala.

Second Grade

First: Allyson Heng, Monrovia Elementary School, Huntsville, Ala.
Second: Brock Hubbard, Daphne Elementary School, Daphne, Ala.
Honorable Mention: Drew Black, Mars Hill Bible School,

Florence, Ala.
Taylor Middleton, Jackson Academy, Jackson, Ala.

Third Grade

First: Morgan Chandler, Mars Hill Bible School, Florence, Ala.
Second: Caitlin Tidwell, Mars Hill Bible School, Florence, Ala.
Honorable Mention: Antonio Lawson, ABC Elementary School, Alberta, Ala.
Hollie Martin, Creek View Elementary School, Maylene, Ala.
Abbye Mathis, Coosa Valley Elementary School, Cropwell, Ala.
Randy Smith, Fairview Elementary School, Cullman, Ala.

Fourth Grade

First: Alex Smith, Mars Hill Bible School, Florence, Ala.
Second: Evan Fowler, Mars Hill Bible School, Florence, Ala.
Honorable Mention: Austin Collum, Mars Hill Bible School, Florence, Ala.
Lucas Jolley, Geraldine Elementary School, Geraldine, Ala.
Mitch McHargue, Jackson Intermediate School, Jackson, Ala.

Fifth Grade

First: Lydia Ward, Monroe Academy, Monroeville, Ala.
Second: Hannah White, West End Elementary School, Altoona, Ala.
Leah Dobbins, Crestline Elementary School, Hartselle, Ala.
Honorable Mention: April Davis, Straughn Elementary School, Andalusia, Ala.
Luke Davis, Fairview Elementary School, Cullman, Ala.
Paige Luna, Monrovia Elementary School, Huntsville, Ala.
Karla Savage, Geraldine Elementary School, Geraldine, Ala.
Savannah Camp, Alabama Christian Academy, Montgomery, Ala.

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Sixth Grade

- First: Garrett Hardee, Monroe Academy,
Monroeville, Ala.
- Second: Jack Esco, Alabama Christian
Academy, Montgomery, Ala.
Lindsey Solomon, Alabama Christian
Academy, Montgomery, Ala.
- Honorable Mention: Cody Farris, Brilliant Elementary
School, Brilliant, Ala.
Jacob Murphy, Cahawba Christian
Academy, Centreville, Ala.
Sheranne Young, ABC Elementary
School, Alberta, Ala.

Essay contest winners are as follows:

Seventh Grade

- First: Morgan Long, DeArmanville
School, Anniston, Ala.
- Second: Austin Lafferty, Chelsea Middle
School, Columbiana, Ala.

Eighth Grade

- First: Brandy Lingo, Abbeville Middle
School, Abbeville, Ala.
- Second: Jessica Thrasher, Abbeville Middle
School, Abbeville, Ala.

Ninth Grade

- First: Alison Curlee, DeArmanville
School, Anniston, Ala.
- Second: Justin Jones, Sylvania High School,
Sylvania, Ala.

These activities are conducted in coordination with the Law Enforcement and Traffic Safety Division of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. For information about seat belt safety, please contact Lynn B. Williams, Injury Prevention Division, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease, The RSA Tower, Suite 983, P. O. Box 303017, Montgomery, Ala. 36130-3017, telephone (334) 206-5539 or 1-800-252-1818, e-mail lwilliams@adph.state.al.us.

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Carol F. Mysinger, M.Ed., M.P.A.....Director

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and Community Affairs

Commendations

Health department employees who are listed here have received letters of commendation recently. To recognize other employees, please send letters through your supervisors or the state health officer to Alabama's Health.

Amanda Calhoun
Injury Prevention Division

From Robert Cole, Ph.D.
Pittsford, N.Y.
Emily Sawyer
Montgomery, Ala.

Darrlyn Cornelius
Diabetes Branch

Sondra Reese
Health Promotion & Chronic Disease

From Jack Hataway, M.D., M.P.H.
Montgomery, Ala.

Roger Prewett
Facilities Management

From Judy Roberson
Lineville, Ala.

Keith Wright
Communications and Social Marketing

From Anita Sanford
Nutrition & Physical Activity Unit Staff
Professional & Support Services

Nancy Wright
Injury Prevention Division

From Col. Mike Coppage
Montgomery, Ala.

Retirees named

The following public health employees retired effective July 1.

Linda Bryant - Geneva County Health Department
James Flournoy - Public Health Area IX
Doris Harden - Health Promotion and Chronic Disease
Judy Harris - Covington County Health Department
Mary Hennis - Washington County Health Department
Earnestine Jeter - Bureau of Clinical Laboratories
Wilson Turner - Washington County Health Department

Speaking of Retirement Saving For Your Future

Concerned that Americans are not saving enough for retirement and other important needs, the Social Security Administration and the American Savings Education Council (ASEC) in May launched a new national campaign called **Save For Your Future**. This campaign is about informing Americans of the need to plan and save for retirement and other life stages.

The majority of people working today expect their retirement income to come from their pension, Social Security and personal savings. Experts estimate that a person will require between 70 and 80 percent of his or her preretirement income to retire comfortably. According to SSA, many Americans think that Social Security alone will guarantee their financial future. However, Social Security was never meant to be the sole source of income in retirement. It was and is meant to be part of a “three-legged stool,” along with pensions and personal savings. The Save for Your Future campaign emphasizes the importance of saving with easy-to-use tools that can help you make and start a financial plan.

SSA and ASEC recommend four basic steps to secure your financial future:

- * **Calculate** how much money you may need for retirement or other goals. To begin calculating how much you will need for retirement, use your Social Security Statement. It is mailed three months before your birthday and provides an estimate of what you can expect to receive from Social Security when you retire.
- * **Plan** how to accumulate money and other assets to help meet your needs. With Social Security only providing 40 percent of preretirement income for the average worker, the balance must come from pensions and personal savings. Increasing your personal savings is a great way to help maintain your standard of living when you retire. One way for public employees in Alabama to increase their personal savings and add to their financial security is by investing in a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan like **RSA-1**. **RSA-1** offers an easy and flexible way to save for retirement while providing tax relief. Call the Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA) today at 800-214-2158, extension 299, and ask how to join **RSA-1** and start saving for a more secure future.
- * **Act** to implement your plan and save the money you and

your family may need. The Social Security Web site (www.ssa.org), American Savings Education Council Web site (www.asec.org), and the Retirement Systems of Alabama Web site (www.rsa.state.al.us) all have important tools you can use to help you plan and calculate your needs for retirement. SSA offers an online benefits planner where you can calculate your estimated retirement benefit. The Retirement Income Estimator links you to the ASEC’s Ballpark Estimate Worksheet, which enables you to combine your estimate of Social Security benefits with estimates from pensions and savings. The RSA Web site has a Retirement Benefit Calculator to help you determine what your monthly retirement benefit will be.

- * **Reassess** your financial needs and the progress of your plan every year during the three-month period between the time you receive your annual statement and your birthday. If your needs have changed or your plan is not working, readjust one or both of them.

To Save For Your Future, remember:

- Social Security alone will not ensure your financial security.
- Use your Social Security Statement as a financial planning tool.
- Let the RSA help by using our Web site and by inquiring about **RSA-1**.
- The sooner you start the more you will have.

Prepared by the Communications staff of the Retirement Systems of Alabama. To have your questions answered in “Speaking of Retirement,” please address them to Mike Pegues, Communications, Retirement Systems of Alabama, 135 South Union St., P. O. Box 302150, Montgomery, Ala. 36130-2150.

Cancer incidence data show improving trend

Preventable risk factors account for 65 percent of all cancer cases in Alabama, according to "Alabama's Cancer Facts & Figures 2003," the first annual report of the Alabama Statewide Cancer Registry produced in collaboration with the American Cancer Society. This 50-page report compiles cancer incidence data for cases diagnosed between 1996 and 2000, and is the first report that provides rates age-adjusted using the recommended year 2000 standard population.

Trends noted include a decrease in cancers among females of nearly 9 percent and in males of nearly 13 percent over a five-year period. Modifiable risk factors that lead to cancer include tobacco use, diet, obesity and sedentary lifestyle, which account for 65 percent of all cancers.

A variety of factors including viruses, growth and reproductive, alcohol, socioeconomic status, environmental pollution and radiation, prescription drugs/medical procedures, and food additives/salt/contaminants represent 25 percent of cancers. Occupational factors account for 5 percent of cancers, while family history accounts for 5 percent of cases.

This publication provides county-specific rates by race and sex for the most commonly diagnosed cancers and those for which public health interventions exist. These cancers are lung, colon/rectum, female breast, prostate, cervix, oral and melanoma.

These data were compiled by the Alabama Statewide Cancer Registry which relies on hospital cancer registrars, physicians and others to report cancer cases. The registry is maintained in the Chronic Disease Prevention Division of the Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease.

The publication can be viewed on the agency Web site at www.adph.org/cancer_registry. For more information contact Reda Wilson, M.P.H., R.H.I.T., C.T.R., director at 334-206-5552, e-mail rwilson@adph.state.al.us or the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345, www.cancer.org.



State employees in Montgomery celebrated the 15th National Employee Health and Fitness Day by taking a one-mile walk around the State Capitol Building during their lunch hours on June 27. Blood pressure checks and osteoporosis screenings also were provided. National Employee Health and Fitness Day is a national observance created to promote the benefits of physical activity for individuals at their worksites

Calendar of Events



July 24

ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m. For more information contact Jim McVay, Dr.P.A., (334) 206-5600.



August 12

Enhancing Stroke Treatment Systems, 1-3 p.m. For more information contact Janice Cook, (334) 206-5610.



August 13

Laboratory Update, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Debbie Thomasson, (334) 206-5648.



August 20

Medicaid Eligibility Update, For Alabama Case Managers, 10 a.m. -12 noon. For more information contact Priscilla Miles, (334) 242-5658.



August 26

ICD-9-CM Coding Update, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Janice McIntosh, (334) 347-2664, extension 400.



August 27

Preconceptual Counseling, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Annie Vosel, (334) 206-2959.



September 17

HIV and Females, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Debbie Thomasson, (334) 206-5648.



September 24

Home Health Aide and Home Attendant Continuing Education, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Janice McIntosh, (334) 347-2664, extension 400.



October 2

ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m. For more information contact Jim McVay, Dr.P.A., (334) 206-5600.



October 3

Nurse Practitioner Billing and Reimbursement, time to be announced. For more information contact Genelle Lee, Alabama Board of Nursing, (334) 242-4184.



October 8

HIV and Pharmacology, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Debbie Thomasson, (334) 206-5648.

