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Secondhand smoke may trigger heart attacks

Secondhand tobacco smoke contains at least 250 chemicals that are known to be toxic or carcinogenic, and is responsible for more than 35,000 heart disease deaths in the U.S. each year, as well as 3,000 lung cancer deaths.

A new study published in May in the *British Medical Journal* reports that the implementation of a comprehensive local clean indoor air ordinance in Helena, Mont., may have resulted in a rapid reduction in heart attacks. The study found hospital admissions for acute myocardial infarction declined by about 40 percent during the six months the ordinance was in effect and rebounded after the ordinance was suspended.

Dr. Terry Pechacek, associate director of science in CDC's Office on Smoking and Health, who was invited to write a commentary on the study, said, "This study is important because it focuses attention on the large body of evidence that suggests that secondhand smoke exposure causes surprisingly large increases in acute cardiovascular risk."

According to Pechacek, research indicates that nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at typical levels may incur more than one-third of the heart disease risk of someone who smokes 20 cigarettes a day. Also, even short-term exposures - lasting as little as 30 minutes - may pose significant risks, especially in persons who already have or are at special risk of heart disease.

These effects are quite different from those of secondhand smoke exposure on lung cancer, where the very significant risk increases over years of exposure. The

commentary reviews recent evidence on specific mechanisms in the body that may account for these findings.

Dr. Pechacek and co-author, Stephen Babb, a CDC health education specialist, note in the commentary that the public health implications of these findings are dramatic. They suggest that persons with pre-existing heart disease or high-risk profiles for heart disease should avoid all indoor environments that allow smoking.

Family members should avoid exposing these persons to secondhand smoke at home or in vehicles. On a broader level, these findings suggest that comprehensive clean indoor air policies similar to Helena's could result in an almost immediate drop in heart attacks. If such policies were implemented nationwide, they could potentially save thousands of lives each year by sharply reducing the toll of heart disease - the nation's leading killer.

"The public health implications of these findings are dramatic," said State Health Officer, Donald E. Williamson. "The impact of secondhand smoke exposure on heart disease risk appears to be substantial and rapid, but rapidly reversible through the establishment of smoke-free environments. This study further reinforces the importance of implementing smoke-free policies as an effective way to decrease exposure to a common and completely preventable public health hazard in our state," he said.

Both the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Task Force on Community Preventive Services have concluded

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PASS Program honors its volunteers

On May 12 Director Martha Ellis and her staff at the PASS Program in Autauga County took time out to thank the many volunteers that work with them to make their program a success.

PASS, which means Peers are Staying Straight, is a program that uses positive peer pressure to encourage teens to stay away from drugs and alcohol. Students who join the program receive identification cards that they can use for discounts at local businesses and to attend activities for PASS students only. Members of the program also agree to an initial drug screen and periodic drug testing.

With only a five-member staff, the PASS program relies on its volunteers to help keep the program successful.

“There is no volunteer that is more important than the other. Each of you has given your time and energy to this program. I really feel like we are making a difference with our children,” Ellis said to the volunteers.

The PASS coalition has both adult and teen volunteer citizens who serve in PASS programs and activities throughout the county.

Anita Byrd, who was honored for her volunteer work with the Adult Coalition, feels that PASS is rewarding in many aspects. “One of the things that has happened in the community is the awareness that parents now have. They now know where to go to get answers. It’s also nice to see that students think it’s fun to be drug free now.”

The Alabama Department of Public Health was also recognized for allowing photographer Marion Wilford to travel to the schools in the county and photograph students for



The PASS program staff pictured left to right: Angie Byrd, Brandalyn Wright, Lauren Foshee, Martha Ellis, Laurie Hatfield and Missy Thompson.

their identification cards, as well as providing all the materials needed to make the cards. And volunteers from the RSVP, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, were honored for their help with the PASS program. Last year 11 volunteers started working to ensure the program’s success.

“I believe kids need as many role models as they can have,” said Byrd.

The mayor of Prattville stopped by to honor the

PASS.....*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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- Arrol Sheehan, M.A. Editor
- Takenya Stokes, J.D. Contributing Editor
- Toni Prater Graphic Designer
- Marion Wilford Photographer

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

PASS.....continued from page 2

volunteers for their hard work. "Thank you for all that you do for the PASS program," said Mayor Jim Byard.

Since the program was started four years ago, the positive impact on the county and its residents has been impressive.

"When we first started this program in 1997 there was a 33.3 percent noncompliance rate of businesses selling alcohol to children. Today there is zero percent noncompliance," said Ellis.

This year the program started out with a goal of having a 61 percent participation rate in 7th through 10th graders. Presently, they have a 62 percent participation rate, exceeding their goal after every school increased enrollment in the program this year.

Schools are also working with the PASS program to reduce truancy among their students. In partnership with the Autauga County School System, the PASS Program monitors truancy cases. Families with teens who are truant are provided support, counseling and assistance to ensure that the teen returns to school.

"The schools and law enforcement have been doing a great job at identifying students and catching them. This is important because we believe all at risk behavior may be a sign of drug use," said Ellis.

Not only have the teens in the program taken a positive step in their lives and decided to remain drug and alcohol free, they have also tried to improve conditions in Autauga County. Last year students in the PASS program's youth coalition spoke before the Prattville City Council in favor of the smoking ordinance that passed in May 2003. They

also surveyed people in the community for their opinions and helped put up billboards

Since the ordinance passed, 79 percent of the businesses decided to become smoke-free. Of those who decided to become smoke free, 52 percent have reported that business has remained the same, 23 percent have said that sales have increased and only 6 percent have said that there has been a decrease in their business.

Youth from the program also work with the Department of Youth Services at its boot camp educating young people about the negative effects of drug use.

PASS has been recognized nationally for the work that it has done in Autauga County. In 2002 the program received the Outstanding Coalition Award from the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, the principal national substance abuse prevention organization. Currently the program is studying whether or not the program has reduced drug use.

"Confucius once said that the most beautiful sight in the world is seeing a child going down the road after you have shown the way. I think we're doing that," said Ellis.

By TAKENYA STOKES

Secondhand smoke.....continued from page 1

that the most effective method for reducing secondhand smoke exposure is the establishment of smoke-free environments.

The Tobacco Prevention and Control Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health educates communities regarding the hazardous effects of exposure to secondhand smoke and monitors progress toward a smoke-free Alabama.

The division is currently assessing work sites' tobacco-related policies. The program compiled a database that analyzes the relative strength of city ordinances regarding tobacco.

Ninety-seven Alabama cities with a population of 2,000 or more have ordinances addressing secondhand

smoke, but most provide only limited protection. The program also assessed the strength of public schools' policies regarding tobacco use and exposure. All public schools are required by the Alabama Administrative Code to be tobacco free. The Clean Indoor Air Act of 2003 also requires school events to be smoke free.

To obtain a copy of the research article or the Acute Cardiovascular Risks of Secondhand Smoke Exposure commentary, visit the *British Medical Journal* Web site at www.bmj.com. For more information about secondhand smoke visit the CDC Web site at www.cdc.gov.

Teen rally brings teenagers and parents together for a positive experience

The Sylacauga office of the Talladega County Health Department sponsored its second successful teen rally May 22 at the J. Craig Smith Community Center. The rally was held during May, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month.

More than 250 people turned out for the free Saturday afternoon event which featured special speakers, lots of health information, music and door prizes. Teens and their parents filled the bleachers and chairs at the three-hour event.

Social work coordinator Alva Phifer said, "It was wonderful! The boys and girls really had a good time and were attentive to the speakers. Many told their friends about the rally last year. Even graduating high school seniors volunteered to help with the program."

A newspaper article printed prior to the event stated that almost 15,000 teenage girls become pregnant every year in Alabama, and Talladega County has one of the higher sexually transmitted disease case rates in the state. Other problems teens are experiencing include juvenile delinquency, HIV/AIDS, conflicts and anger management.

In 2003 the successful rally was held on a Thursday evening, but teens expressed a preference for a Saturday afternoon gathering. Public health staff, including Plan First Coordinator Linda Thompson, volunteered their time and energy to work on planning the rally. Also participating were ALL Kids, Save-A-Life, and Central Alabama Community College,

T-shirts and a host of other items were donated for goodie bags and door prizes. The health department team included Michele Jefferies, Darlene Bradford, Sonja Pope, Bobbie Lykes, Lynn Phourrough, Kaye Thackerson, Janice Phillips, Belinda Hutchinson, Renee Jacobs, Lena Riggins and Alexis Lockhart.

Speakers were excellent and included Kathy Midgley,



The Sylacauga teen rally had a great turnout.

director of the Children's First Foundation and a former Mrs. Alabama; Miss Sylacauga 2004 Cierra Johnson; a Sylacauga police officer (Willie Kidd) who spoke on crime; a public health nurse (Kim Jordan) who addressed STDs, including HIV/AIDS and abstinence; Miss Sylacauga who spoke on tolerance and conflict; and a recovering drug addict who urged others not to follow that path.

The Coosa Central Community Choir and other school and community choruses did a wonderful job and there were songs and dances interspersed between the speakers to keep things moving. Performing were Miss Sylacauga Idol and Amy Holcomb, the second runner-up in Alabama's Idol competition. Participants enjoyed creative dancing as well.

Positivism was key to the afternoon's events, and teenagers and community members remain excited about the rally which was both fun and of benefit to all who attended.

"Everybody just jumped in and really enjoyed themselves," Ms. Phifer said, and she feels that the Teen Rally will have a long-term positive effect on the teens and the community.

2003 ADPH Annual Report now available

The 2003 Annual Report is now available. The report outlines the activities and expenditures of Public Health during the year 2003.

This document is available electronically on the Alabama Department of Public Health's Web site at www.adph.org under A-Z Contents. If you would like to be sent a printed copy of this document, please contact Takenya Stokes; Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic

Disease; The RSA Tower; Suite 910C; P.O. Box 303017; Montgomery, Alabama 36130-3017; telephone 334-206-7026; e-mail tstokes@adph.state.al.us.

Health legislation enacted

The Alabama Legislature passed several laws this year related to health care issues including the following:

- Act No. 04-246 would allow for the appropriate testing of pregnant women and newborns for sexually transmitted diseases.
- Act No. 04-263 would authorize the Escambia County Board of Health to set reasonable fees which may be charged for services rendered by the county health department.
- Act No. 04-396 would amend the Alabama Statewide

Cancer Registry to include benign brain-related tumors in cases required to be reported to the State Health Department.

- Act No. 04-443 would authorize the ADPH to establish, create and maintain a controlled substances prescription database program.
- HB716 would increase the rate of tax on all cigarettes and other tobacco products sold in Alabama.
- SHR81 would create an Emergency Response Commission to address the health care crisis in Alabama.

Successful Boligee abstinence-only workshop receives international notice

The *Abstinence Clearinghouse*, an international clearinghouse for abstinence-only information and association of abstinence-only advocates, included an article on its Web site: www.abstinence.net featuring the community-based, abstinence-only Boligee 2000 Inc. in the June 16 update of its e-mailed *Affiliate News* titled "Networking Leaders for Abstinence."

Boligee 2000 Inc., one of the Title V Alabama Abstinence-Only Education Program's (AAEP) community-based abstinence-only projects, recently conducted a very successful Parent/Community Leader Workshop as part of its ongoing Parent Involvement Program. The workshop titled "Everybody's Talking About It - Can We Talk?" was held at the Zion Friendship Baptist Church in Eutaw (Greene County), Ala., on May 23, 2004.

Seventy-six parents/community leaders participated in the workshop, which was quite a feat for a project located in a small, rural county with a population of approximately 10,035. The afternoon program featured a guest speaker on the topic of "Why AIDS is a growing threat to women, especially black women." Additionally, the project coordinator and staff discussed the importance of abstinence-until-marriage education and distributed abstinence-until-marriage pledge forms to all of the participants.

"Congratulations to Boligee 2000, Inc., for its on-going parent involvement efforts, through programs such as this one, to provide parents/community leaders in their

community with abstinence-until-marriage education/information," said Susan Stewart, R.N., M.S.N., director of AAEP.

For more information, contact Eunice Outland, Boligee 2000, Inc., Project Coordinator, at (205) 336-8716, or visit the AAEP Web site at: www.adph.org/abstinence.



Front row, left to right, Maxine Neal, speaker/presenter, HIV/AIDS outreach coordinator, Ryan White Title III Program, Maude L. Whatley Health Center; Magnolia Brown, Boligee 2000 Educator/ Staff; Ann Phillips, Boligee 2000 Educator/ Staff; Opal Outland, Boligee 2000 Parent Involvement Coordinator; Willie Gilmore, Boligee 2000 Educator/Staff; Second row, Shirley Eatman, Boligee 2000 Educator/Staff; Glenda Hodges, Boligee 2000 Educator/Staff; Eunice Outland, Boligee 2000 Project Coordinator.



Congratulations to Viki Brant. Chronic Disease directors nationally named her “Chronic Disease Champion” for the month of June 2004. She directs the Cancer Prevention Division, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease. Viki was selected because of her work with the Chronic Disease Directors as chairperson of the Breast and Cervical Cancer Council, which resulted in program improvements in the activities of CDC-funded breast and cervical cancer early detection programs nationwide.

Bracelet no longer required to enforce DNAR orders

Since 1995 emergency medical services personnel in Alabama have been able to honor adult patients’ wishes to withhold resuscitative measures which might only prolong the dying process for those suffering from terminal conditions.

Both the patient and his or her physician must complete an Alabama Do Not Attempt Resuscitation Order Form. If the patient is incapable of making an informed decision, the form must be signed by his lawfully authorized attorney-in-fact, health care surrogate or legal guardian.

The State Board of Health eliminated the requirement that a bracelet be worn to indicate when they prefer not to be resuscitated effective June 23.

The Emergency Medical Services Do Not Attempt Resuscitation Order Forms will be made available by the

Division of Emergency Medical Services to hospice organizations, nursing homes, hospitals, physicians and home health agencies.

The department will continue to use the current supply of forms by simply marking the blank for the bracelet number as N/A. Future forms will be printed without the space for a bracelet number. Providers may request a supply of forms by e-mail to spayne@adph.state.al.us or calling 334-206-5383.

Questions regarding this procedure should be directed to Jim Prince, Director, Division of Emergency Medical Services, at 334-206-5237 or by e-mail to jprince@adph.state.al.us.

Retirement

Glenda Coley - Talladega County Health Department, retired May 1.

Social worker wins competition with ACORN



Shown are John McKissic, LGSW, Social Work director, Public Health Area 8; Dollie Hambrick, MSW, director, Social Work Unit, Office of Professional and Support Services; and Cheryl Stacy, LBSW.

Cheryl Stacy, public health social worker with the Lee County Health Department, was selected as winner of a contest to name the social work electronic care coordination system. A team of judges selected her entry from among 15 others submitted. Most of the names proposed were acronyms for the electronic system.

The entry submitted by Ms. Stacy was ACORN, which stands for Alabama Care Coordination Official Records Network. She said that the acorn is a positive symbol used in many cultures as a sign of life.

The ACORN system, designed by Leslie Hay and Darlena Smith with the support of the project manager Arnita Shepherd, receives employees' patient and cost accounting information. Trained by Ms. Shepherd to use the computer system, each care coordinator/case manager is able to document patient care and record program activity in the system.

On June 25 Ms. Stacy was recognized in Montgomery. She has used the electronic system almost all of the time she been employed with public health. "It's been a big help from a social worker's perspective," Ms. Stacy said. "I can look up information on my computer screen when a client calls instead of taking time to look for a paper file. My co-workers and I definitely find this system to be positive."

A public health employee since December 2001, Ms. Stacy formerly worked in the teen family planning program and now works in EPSDT care coordination. A graduate of Auburn University's School of Social Work, she is currently pursuing a master's degree from the University of Alabama in a weekend program and hopes to later attend the UAB School of Public Health to earn a

master's degree in public health.

In thanking the individuals who helped with the judging, Dollie Hambrick, director of the Social Work Unit, Office of Professional and support Services, said, "Contest judges Gayle Sandlin, Brenda Anderson, Shannon O'Donahue and Sally Palmer enjoyed having the opportunity to review the many catchy entries. Thanks to everyone who submitted an entry!"

Refining tables in Word Pro

Word Pro allows users to connect or merge cells within a table. Select the cells that need to be combined by clicking in the first cell, holding down the left mouse button and dragging to select the remaining cell(s).

The “Table” option should be available on the menu bar. Go to “Table” - “Connect Cells” to combine the selected cells. Entire rows can be combined by selecting a cell within the row and going to “Table” - “Connect Row.”

Cells can also be split. After clicking on “Table” - “Split Cell,” a dialog box will appear that allows the user to specify the number of columns and rows to split an individual cell.

By *TRACEY CANNON*
Computer Systems Center

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*.

Faye Allen

Health Provider Standards

from Barry Craig
Birmingham, Ala.

Dena Donovan

Health Provider Standards

From Tracey D. Taylor
Montgomery, Ala.

Nicole Henderson

Center for Health Statistics

from John and Delilah McTier
LaMesa, Calif.

Video Communications Division

Health Promotion and Chronic Disease

from Gina Boyd
Birmingham, Ala.

ABCCEDP hosts its first Provider Conference

The Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (ABCCEDP) hosted its first provider conference on June 16 at the Legends in Prattville. Eighty-one providers, from around the state attended the conference.

The keynote speaker for the day was Dr. Helen Krontiras, a surgeon from the University of Alabama at Birmingham who spoke on breast

cancer risk assessment and the Gail Risk Assessment Model.

On a more personal level, Eunice Burroughs, a patient diagnosed with breast cancer through the ABCCEDP, talked about how important it was for every woman to be screened at the appropriate age. More than once, she stated what the ABCCEDP meant to her and how grateful she was to be introduced to the program. As soon as her treatment and recovery is complete, she wants to start doing community outreach for the program.

As stated by Deborah Pennington, professional education coordinator for the ABCCEDP, “The purpose of the conference, in addition to the educational experience, was to offer an update to providers on various program policies and procedures and an opportunity for them to meet with the program staff.”

“We also wanted to impress upon the providers why the data they provide to us is important,” said Viki Brant, ABCCEDP director, “and I believe this was accomplished based on evaluation comments from the participants.”

Program data submitted by the providers to the ABCCEDP was shared and reflected that Alabama providers are doing an excellent job at reaching priority populations within the medically underserved, particularly minority women and women who report rarely or never receive cervical cancer screening.

By *JORA THOMAS*



Pictured is Eunice Burroughs, a participant of the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Programs, who shares her testimony at the ABCCEDP provider conference.

Lifestyle changes needed to reduce illness and health care expenditures

An epidemic of chronic disease, combined with a population that is aging and makes unhealthy lifestyle choices, has the potential to radically change the quality of life for our state's citizens and to bankrupt the health care system, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns. These chronic diseases include cancer, arthritis, diabetes, stroke and heart disease.

The Alabama Department of Public Health has prepared a publication titled "Chronic Disease in Alabama: Past, Present, and Future Trends." This document describes the status and trends of chronic disease and associated risk factors in the state and provides county-level estimates of chronic disease prevalence.

"We must address healthy lifestyles to avoid the consequences of poor nutrition, tobacco use and lack of physical activity," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. "By adopting healthier lifestyles and managing existing conditions better, it is possible to improve the overall health of Alabama's citizens. Without this improvement, the health care system will be severely strained and health care expenditures will increase."

Trends in chronic disease and associated risk factors among Alabama adults indicate that the state ranks above the national average in percentages of persons who smoke, are obese, are hypertensive, have coronary heart disease and have diabetes. Further, the percentages of persons who are obese or have been told that they have diabetes are increasing at alarming rates within the state. The number of individuals diagnosed with high blood pressure is also increasing. The state has not observed a significant decline in smoking.

Study results indicate that by the year 2020, it is projected that Alabama will have an estimated

- 942,000 adults who smoke - an increase of 14 percent
- 983,000 adults who are obese - an increase of 21 percent
- More than 1.4 million adults who are hypertensive - an increase of 30 percent
- 381,000 adults with diabetes - an increase of 40 percent
- More than 1.3 million adults with arthritis - an increase of 30 percent

In making these projections normal population growth and the aging of Alabama's population were the sole factors used. The projections were made on the assumption that the age-specific rate of disease would remain constant over the next 20 years.

In the report Williamson concludes that individuals,

families and communities must make "vigorous efforts" to reduce the risk of disease and minimize disability which will require both resources and commitment to healthier behaviors.

The report is available on the Alabama Department of Public Health Web site at www.adph.org/ADMINISTRATION/chronicdisease.pdf

Make a Difference:

Join the Alabama Department of Public Health Emergency Response Nurse Volunteer Network



The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is seeking nurses licensed to practice in Alabama, who are willing to volunteer their services should a bioterrorist event or other public health emergency occur. Nurse volunteers might be called upon to serve in a variety of capacities during natural or man-made public health emergencies within the state, and we need your help.



In the event of a catastrophic emergency, local supplies of drugs and medical equipment could be diminished rapidly. The federal government would rapidly send needed pharmaceuticals and supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) to support systems of care and volunteer efforts. Coordinating trained volunteer staff to deploy these supplies and set up mass clinics will be crucial to safeguard our communities.



If you choose to participate, we will provide free emergency preparedness training for which you will receive continuing education contact hours. Training opportunities will be provided on smallpox administration technique, mass vaccination exercises, basic first aid, CPR classes and other mass care and bioterrorism topics.



When training dates have been scheduled you will be notified of locations and times.

There will be training opportunities for nurse volunteers throughout the year.

If you are interested in joining the ADPH Volunteer Nurse Network, please contact:

Jessica Hardy

334-206-5226

jhardy@adph.state.al.us

Alabama Department of Public Health
Office of Professional & Support Services
201 Monroe Street, Suite 1010
Montgomery, AL 36104

Alabama Department of Public Health

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SPEAKING OF RETIREMENT

Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card

A new law gives people with Medicare the power to start saving on prescription drugs right now.

The following are important points to help you possibly save money on outpatient prescription drugs and to learn more about your options:

- * Medicare has contracted with private companies to offer discounts on prescription drugs for people who would otherwise pay full price for their prescriptions.
- * This is a temporary, voluntary program that can provide immediate relief and is available to all Medicare beneficiaries, except those with drug coverage through Medicaid. There are **no** income requirements.
- * Beneficiaries who choose to participate must choose one card - among several companies - by considering factors such as enrollment fee, drugs covered, participating pharmacies and percentage of discount on the drug(s) they take.
 - Enrollment in the card program can cost up to \$30 annually.
 - Savings are estimated to be between 10-25 percent off the retail price of the drugs.
 - Covered drugs, participating pharmacies, and percentage of discounts vary by card sponsor.
- * However, since the discounts offered by the Medicare-approved cards are off the **RETAIL** price of the drugs, persons with retiree (or veteran's) coverage **are not likely** to benefit from participation in the card program. State retirees and retirees participating in PEEHIP or SEIB pay co-pays for their prescription drugs which are usually less than what the discounted price of the drug would be if using a Medicare-approved discount card. Therefore, it is, **most likely**, not necessary or beneficial for retirees or dependents insured with SEIB or PEEHIP insurance to enroll in any of the Medicare approved discount drug card programs.
- * An important part of the Medicare Prescription Drug Discount Card Program is a credit of up to \$600 a year for eligible low-income beneficiaries. However, persons who have insurance coverage for their prescription drugs **are not** eligible for this assistance.
- * Medicare and Social Security have mailed information to beneficiaries. Enrollment began in May, and the program started in June. No one should contact you by telephone or in person. If they do, you should call the

Fraud Hotline at 1-800-HHS-TIPS. You can sign up any time this year and there is no deadline or late enrollment penalty.

- * The benefits derived from participation in the discount card program vary from person to person. It is best to address each person's situation individually in order to make the best decision for that person.
- * **It is very important to do your homework!**
- * For more information and/or to obtain assistance in determining if the Medicare-approved Drug Discount Card Program is right for you, please:

Call 1-800-MEDICARE

Ask about the drug card

Or visit www.medicare.gov

Click on Prescription Drug and Other Assistance Programs

Call your Area Agency on Aging

At 1-800-AGELINE (243-5463)

Ask to speak with the SHIP Coordinator

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.



Calendar of Events



July 20

Preparedness Update: Emerging Infectious Diseases and Bioterrorism Risk (SCCPHP), 12 noon-1:30 p.m. For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



August 11

2004 Infection Control and Lab Update, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Michele Jones, (334) 206-5655.



August 12

Chemical Agents of Opportunity for Terrorism (SCCPHP), 12 noon-1:30 p.m. For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

August 12, 13

Alabama Black Belt Health Summit 2004, Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center, Montgomery. For more information contact (334) 269-6251, www.comcarenetwork.org.



August 19

Radiological Terrorism (SCCPHP), 12 noon-1:30 p.m. For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



August 24

The Behavioral Health Response to Disasters, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

September 7-10

“Responding to the Challenge,” Alabama Primary Health Care Association, Perdido Beach Resort. For more information contact Al Fox or Angie Austin, (334) 271-7068.



September 14

Emerging Trends: STD Treatment and Body Piercing, Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Michele Jones, (334) 206-5655.



September 15

WIC Vendor Training, 1-3 p.m. For more information contact Dennis Blair, (334) 206-5672.



September 22

Home Health Aides and Home Attendants, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Brenda Elliott, (334) 347-2664, extension 402.



September 28

Steps to Success in Community-Based HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs. Module 3, 1-3 p.m. For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.