

Alabama's Health

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New Leaders Bring Years of Experience to Their Expanded Roles

This issue highlights some bureau or office directors who have been promoted in recent months and outlines their visions for supporting their teams. Matt Conner, Kelly (Stevens) Franklin, Robyn Peacock, and Nick Swindall are introduced.

All four of the directors profiled have advanced in their careers from other positions within the department. Their skills have grown as they have worked toward the department's vision of healthy people, healthy communities, and a healthy Alabama.

In addition to discussing their career paths, they share personal information about themselves and their lives outside the Central Office.

Matt Conner, Director Bureau of Environmental Services

Matt started his departmental career with the Logistics Division as a warehouse worker in 2006, traveling the state picking up surplus property and performing property audits. A year of moving furniture around was enough, so in 2007, he was hired as a Public Health Environmentalist at the Montgomery County Health Department. There, he worked in General Sanitation performing onsite inspections, pool inspections, and reviewing animal bite reports.

In 2013, he was promoted to Public Health Environmentalist Senior and supervised the General Sanitation program at the Montgomery County Health Department. In 2016, he transferred to the Elmore County Health Department where he supervised all the environmental programs and staff. In 2017, he was promoted to Public Health Environmental



**Matt Conner, Director
Bureau of
Environmental Services**

Supervisor and assumed supervision of Autauga County's environmental programs.

As ADPH transitioned from areas to districts, Matt served as the Acting Environmental Director of the East Central District, eventually being promoted to Public Health Environmental Manager in 2019.

In 2021, Matt transferred to the Bureau of Environmental Services to perform program compliance with the Division of Community Environmental Protection. In 2023, Matt was promoted to deputy director of the Bureau and to Director in January 2026.

"Working in environmental is both challenging and rewarding," he said. "Every day is different. I am still amazed, after doing this for 20 years, when a situation arises that I have never seen before. The support I have is humbling, and it underscores how great it is to work for ADPH."

Kelly (Stevens) Franklin, M.S. Director, Bureau of Communicable Disease

Kelly (Stevens) Franklin is no stranger to Public Health, bringing over three decades of dedicated service to her role as Director of the Bureau of Communicable Disease (BCD), a position she was promoted to in October 2025.

Kelly's public health journey began in 1992 as an entomologist with the Mobile County Health Department, where she later advanced to Director of the Bureau of Environmental Protection.



**Kelly and her husband
Jason enjoy a dinner out.**

Continued on page 3

Montgomery County Health Department Sexual Health Clinic Follows Best Practices

In October of 2023, an Enhancing STI and Sexual Health Clinic Infrastructure grant was awarded for a 5-year period. Under this grant and in conjunction with other STD funding, the Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) developed a Fast Track testing clinic with the longer-term plan of offering HIV PrEP and Doxy PEP services to central Alabama residents.

In less than 3 years, the MCHD sexual health clinic is providing HIV PrEP services to 148 active patients and Doxy PEP services to 150 active patients, while providing rapid testing services to an average of nearly 300 patients per month.

The sexual health clinic at MCHD takes a multidisciplinary approach to meet the needs of its patients. Nurses, disease intervention specialists, social workers, clerical staff, a nurse practitioner, and a health services administrator work closely together to grow the program, serve and educate the public, and meet the requirements of the grant.

Recently, Joshua O'Neal, Program Director for the Southeast STI/HIV Prevention Training Center, made a site visit to the MCHD sexual health clinic to observe progress and best practices. O'Neal was complimentary of the services being provided, saying that the growth MCHD has shown in a short

time exceeds what he sees in many other programs on the same grant. He also commented that the services being received at MCHD were what one would expect to find in a much larger market with a larger operational budget.

Assistant District Administrator James Hardin said, "The staff at MCHD hopes to continue to develop the program and be an example of best practices for other public health departments in the Southeast."



From left, Narquissa Carson, April Montgomery, Shaneka Feagin, Vinecia Jackson, Ja'Leel Russell, Lionel Saulsberry.



Front row, from left, Maya Smith, Franshauna Pritchett, Narquissa Carson, Yolanda Hill, Lionel Saulsberry; back row, from left, Fred Coley, Michael, Markhan Hagins.



From left, Carlavia Edwards, Tamara Shufford, Narquissa Carson, Michael Gibson, April Montgomery, Karen Davis, Vinecia Jackson, Shaneka Feagin, Lionel Saulsberry.

Alabama Department of Public Health

Mission

To promote, protect, and improve Alabama's health.

Vision

Healthy People. Healthy Communities. Healthy Alabama.

Core Values

Excellence, Integrity, Innovation, and Community.

Alabama's Health

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Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H.
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Editor

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New Leaders, continued from page 1

In 2009, she transitioned to the Central Office and took the helm of the Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks Division in 2010.

Throughout her career, Kelly has been a steady anchor through many of our state's most critical health crises. She successfully managed the complex Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grants and guided her teams through the H1N1 Influenza, Ebola, Zika, and COVID-19 responses. Serving as the Scientific Response Manager, she maintained calm, exceptional leadership, steering staff through some of the most stressful time periods in public health history.

"Much of BCD's work happens behind the scenes," Kelly says. "We partner with nearly every ADPH bureau, center, and office, as well as external partners, to provide a timely and appropriate response to mitigate infectious disease threats."

A country girl at heart, Kelly escapes the chaotic disease world by enjoying the outdoors. At their home on Lake Mitchell, she and her husband Jason spend their time boating, fishing, hiking, and eagle-watching. They also love traveling and RV camping with their dogs and family. She is a proud mother of three amazing daughters and a doting "LaLa" to four beautiful grandchildren.

Robyn Peacock, M.B.A., CPM, Director Office of Human Resources

Robyn Peacock returned to Public Health following three and one-half years as Personnel Director at another agency. Robyn began her career at Public Health in January 2012 as assistant to the lab director and manager of the Reporting Sections at the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories.

In 2014, she was promoted to Health Services Administrator I in the Office of Human Resources (OHR) where she said she "was mentored by two of the best former directors who allowed her to learn everything about HR policies and procedures." She was promoted to Personnel Manager in 2017 where she continued to hone her skills as she served the department, working closely with Central Office bureau staff and providing supervisory training around the state.

One of the highlights of her public health career was sharing the 2023 Alabama Public Health Association (AIPHA) Ira L. Myers Excellence in Public Health Award with two other OHR team



While on a mission trip to Ecuador, Robyn stands with one boot in the northern hemisphere and the other in the southern hemisphere. Even in July, the high altitude made it chilly.

members. This was presented at the first AIPHA conference following the COVID-19 pandemic, and she feels extremely humbled for the recognition of contributions made by HR during that time.

Robyn is still amazed by all the work done in the department to protect the health of Alabama citizens and is grateful for the opportunity to be a small part. One of her favorite quotations from motivational speaker Zig Ziglar is, "If you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life!" Robyn loves working at Public Health and looks forward to showing up every day.

When she isn't in the office, she and her husband, Mike, love spending time in the Atlanta area with their two daughters, their husbands, and grandsons Cooper, Liam, and Zakaria. She and Mike also find a great deal of satisfaction serving on mission teams in various parts of the world, having traveled together to Kenya, Ecuador, Czechia (formerly the Czech Republic), and most recently Romania.

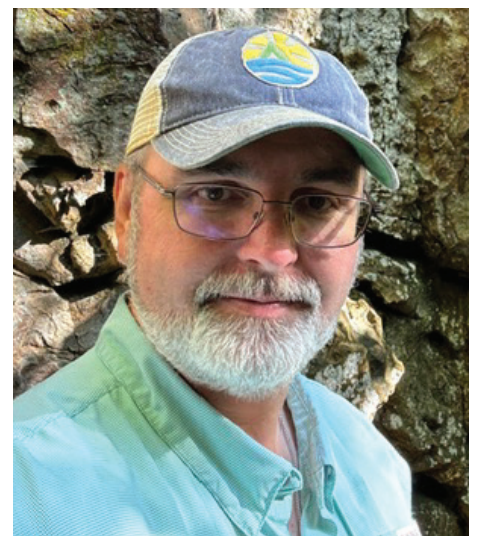
Nick Swindall, Director Office of Radiation Control

Nick began his public health career in March of 2001 as a Radiation Physicist with the X-ray Compliance Branch in the Office of Radiation Control. In 2003, he was promoted to a Senior Radiation Physicist within the same branch. In 2015, he was promoted to a supervisor position in the Environmental Monitoring and Calibration Branch of Radiation Control. During this time, he was also the project manager for the state's Indoor Radon Grant. In 2019, Nick was made the supervisor of the X-ray Compliance Branch and project manager for the FDA mammography inspection contract.

In 2023, Nick was promoted to the Radiological Health Assistant Director position and in 2026 he was promoted to the Radiological Health Director position. Nick has been a part of the Comprehensive Cancer Coalition for the past decade and has assisted with the shade structure grants.

He said, "Radiation kinda runs in my family." Nick has a twin brother, Ricky, who has been a technologist in the radiology field for the past 25-plus years. This may have been one of the reasons why he enjoys radiological health.

When Nick is not at work, you can find him doing something on the family farm in Troy. He and his wife Amy, which coincidentally is also his twin brother's wife's name, raise beef cattle and yard chickens with the help of their son Ryan and daughter Brea.



***Nick Swindall, Director
Office of Radiation Control***

Dr. Sherri Davidson Honored with CSTE Distinguished Leader Award

At the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) annual meeting in Boston on June 1, the council presented its Distinguished Leader Award to State Epidemiologist Sherri Davidson, Ph.D., M.P.H., director of the Office of Informatics and Data Analytics (OIDA). The award recognizes a subcommittee chair, liaison, or consultant who has provided exceptional guidance and leadership.

This latest accolade follows her recognition as the 2021 Distinguished Alumnus/Alumni Award by the UAB School of Public Health. She was named State Epidemiologist in 2016 and is the inaugural director of OIDA, established in 2021.

The mission of OIDA is to ensure that the determinants and distributions of disease and health for Alabama are accurately assessed and the information is disseminated in a meaningful way. OIDA provides support and input with epidemiologic integration, analysis, interpretation, determination, visualization, and dissemination. OIDA also facilitates communications between Alabama hospitals and the department for hospitals to implement electronic case reporting for reportable conditions.

Sherri began her departmental career as a Disease Intervention Specialist, and earned her M.P.H. and Ph.D. at UAB. Dr. Davidson served as CSTE Executive Board President starting during the first summer of COVID-19 in 2020 until 2021. She served on the CSTE Executive Board 2019-2026. She also served as the inaugural chair of the CSTE Program and Policy Committee from 2022 through 2025 and has been

heavily involved in the council's Surveillance and Informatics spaces for years.

A nominator praised her "impeccable logic and her calm confidence" and compared it to witnessing a kind of "quiet magic."

The nominator wrote, "What sets her apart as a leader is her quiet, front-porch warmth, and unhurried, genuine kindness that cuts through the noise of long days and longer nights. She radiates kindness and never fails to create space for her colleagues and their well-being.

"I think it must be a spark of her gardener's heart—she is a certified master gardener, you know! She nurtures, and shares little truths that grow on you long after a call or meeting concludes."

The nominator concluded, "Sherri's rare blend of expertise in epidemiology, infectious disease control, and data analytics makes her a force in public health, but it's her heart, warmth, and enduring presence that make her unforgettable. And we're fortunate she's done her share of amazing leading with us."



"Overwhelmed" was the adjective State Epidemiologist Dr. Sherri Davidson used to describe her emotions when she was presented the national award.

Alabama Securities Commission Podcast Features Well Woman Program in 'She Can' Series

"When we think about financial wellness, we often concentrate on budgeting, saving, and investing. However, one of the biggest threats to our financial security is the unexpected cost of healthcare."

The Alabama Securities Commission makes the statement above to offer an alternative approach to reduce financial stress beyond saving and investing. Recognizing that healthcare costs are an often-overlooked aspect of Alabamians' finances, the commission partnered with the department on an episode of its podcast, "She Can," titled "Investing in You: How Alabama's Well Woman Program Protects Your Health and Your Wallet."

The invitation to participate in the podcast came after a collaborative May meeting with several other state agencies hosted by the Alabama Women's Commission. Mikala McCurry of the Securities Commission reached out to Molly Mims, M.S.N., R.N., the program coordinator for the Well Woman Program, to invite her to be a guest. In this episode, Ms. Mims joined the discussion to explain how the Well Woman initiative supports women in Alabama.

Well Woman promotes healthy living, prevention, and early disease detection to increase longevity and quality of life for women ages 15 to 55 in select counties. The podcast emphasized that prioritizing one's physical health today can help prevent significant financial burdens in the future.



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.

Chris Adams

Katie Brent

Amy Gordon

Bureau of Information Technology
from Sandra Blakely
Health Media and Communications
Montgomery, Ala.

Georgette Blackmon

Center for Health Statistics
from Haoyang Yan
Yuanfan Yang
Birmingham, Ala.

Megan Jones, RN

Tallapoosa County Health
Department
from George Miranda
Russell Medical Center
Alexander City, Ala.

Talencia LeFlore

Center for Health Statistics
from Phyllis Wilder
Auburn, Ala.

Kaila Overstreet, NP

Escambia County Health Department
from Renae Carpenter, LICSW-S, PIP
Monroeville, Ala.

Nekeshia Perryman

Center for Health Statistics
from Jamarcus Thompson
Clanton, Ala.

April Reeves-Boyd

Center for Health Statistics
from Darryl and Mollie Jackson
Sumter County, Ala.

Crystal Smith

Center for Health Statistics
from Myra Austin Rogers
Address not given

Shamoune Smith

Center For Health Statistics
from Lakedra Armstead
Lauderdale County, Ala.

Ashley Vice

Center for Health Statistics
from Rebekah Boswell
Auburn, Ala.

New Mobile App Aims to Prevent Infant Deaths in the Wiregrass

A Southeastern District Infant Safety App called Wiregrass Infant Net for Safety (W.I.N.S.) went live on August 10. The downloadable app gives caregivers the tools and knowledge they need to protect their children and aims to avoid preventable deaths.

App features include the following:

- Back seat alerts that detect when a vehicle stops and, after 5 minutes, prompt the driver to check the back seat to prevent hot car deaths.
- Educational, safe-sleep games that are aimed at preventing SIDS/SUID deaths.
- Vaccine reminders help keep the child on track with timely vaccinations. They are based on the child's date of birth and milestone reminders. If the child is falling behind, the reminders provide resources.
- Alerts for weather and infant product recalls, tips, information on infant products that are not recommended, videos about infant CPR and infant choking, and soothing white noise features.

Crystalee Walters, Maternal Child Health Coordinator for the Southeastern District, said, "Alabama has sadly seen two hot car deaths already this year. We are excited to have this new app that also has district, county, state, and national resources to connect Alabama families with trusted support."

In this pilot project of the Southeastern Public Health District, residents of Barbour, Butler, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston, and Pike counties may download the app. The W.I.N.S. app is available on the App Store and Google Play.

For more information about the app, visit: alabamapublichealth.gov/wins/

Community Resources Fair Held in Hayneville

Public health was a featured community partner in the successful Lowndes County Community Resources Health Fair in Hayneville on May 8. Sixty-five people were served.



Nursing Division Celebrates Clinical Staff During 2026 Nursing Instructional Day

The Nursing Division hosted its annual Nursing Instructional Day on May 7 with the theme “Public Health Nursing: Educating and Caring for Our Community.”

This annual day of education, instruction, and networking is held during the National Nurses Week celebration. On this day, ADPH clinic nurses and aides received valuable information related to core health department services and programs.

State Health Office Dr. Scott Harris opened the day with an encouraging message of service and an expression of appreciation to the staff for the caring and concern staff demonstrate daily for the citizens of Alabama.

Clinical nurses received instruction from a nationally recognized speaker on the subject of the sexually transmitted infection syphilis. A state leader in human trafficking identification and an Alabama Board of Nursing speaker on legal documentation standards completed the nurse track. Participating nurses received continuing education units at no cost.

Clinical aides received instruction from ADPH experts in the areas of caring for individuals with disabilities, hypertension,

category B shipping guidance, and Electronic Health Record documentation.

The event concluded with a combined presentation from a presenter providing a perspective on gratitude as a framework for organizational and personal well-being.

*By Marilyn D. Knight, M.S.N., R.N.
Nurse Educator*



West Central District



East Central District



Southeastern District



Northern District



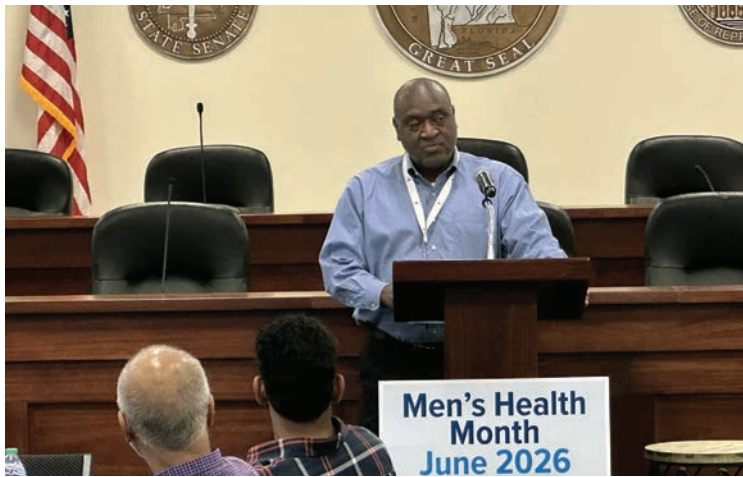
Northeastern District



Southwestern District

MAN-ual Event Celebrates Men's Health

The Office of Community Health hosted the MAN-ual Event on June 12 at the Alabama State House. Free health screenings, lunch, and guidance on heart health and prostate cancer were offered. The purpose of the men-only event was to address health issues such as heart health and prostate cancer proactively.



Retirees

The following departmental employees have retired recently:

March

Carrie Johnson
Northeastern District
Daniel Opichka
Financial Services
Crystal Page
Northern District
Leana Rogers
Health Care Facilities
Pamela Talbot
Northeastern District
James Wood
Southeastern Districts

April

Sandy Bonds
Northern District
Tammy Brown
Immunization
Ophelia Bush
West Central District
Vonda Helton
Clinical Laboratories

Marnetta McDaniel
West Central District
Danny Milstead
Family Health Services
Daphne Baier Treece
Northern District
Lee Wagner
West Central District
Rita Wagnon
Northeastern District

May

Rita Evans
Southwestern District
Carol Gerard
General Counsel
Kimberly Mahan
Northern District
Felicia Murphy
Southwestern District
Kelli Thompson
Southwestern District
Zanetta Tolbert
West Central District

Tanga White
Northeastern District
Kenyatta Woods
East Central District

June

Yolanda Bailey
Northeastern District
Rickey Compton
Information Technology
Carol Talley
Southeastern District -TB

July

Ruth Bailey
Northeastern District
Carla Corr
Southwestern District
Judy Dicks
Field Operations
Latena McClure
HIV Prevention and Care

Carol Mysinger

Prevention, Promotion
and Support
Leigh Salter
Community Environment
Protection

August

Tammy Bean
Northern District
Kelly Boykin
Southwestern District
Judy Cunningham
Family Health Services
Amelia Flowers
Children's Health Insurance
Mark Jackson
Family Health Services
Maria Kamburis
Children's Health Insurance
Mellissa McAdams
Information Technology

Alabama's Support of Recruitment and Hiring Needs through PHIG Recognized

Alabama is one of four jurisdictions in the nation recognized in research published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC's Public Health Infrastructure Grant supports critical public health infrastructure needs across the United States. The initiative's stated purpose is to create a stronger, more resilient public health system that is prepared to face future health threats. From 2008 to 2019, health departments in the U.S. lost at least 40,000 workers because of resignations, retirements, and layoffs.

Through this grant, Workforce Development of the Office of Human Resources collaborated with the Digital Media Branch of the Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support to enhance recruitment efforts. This included writing blog posts highlighting career opportunities within the department. These opportunities have included positions such as nutritionists, licensure and certification surveyors, and disease intervention specialists.

Following regular meetings with in-house recruiters, staff posted job openings on popular employment websites. A related social media campaign, Friendly Face Friday, spotlighted individual employees, giving them a chance to

describe their roles in the department and to share insights into their day-to-day duties and the rewards of working in public health.

Other public health programs featured in the article by Christina L. Chung, Health Scientist, Lead for Evaluation, included the Hawaii

State Department of Health, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and the Riverside County Department of Public Health in California. The Alabama activity highlighted was the standardization of its recruitment processes by hiring recruitment specialists for each of the six public health districts. The article noted that the efforts of these specialists and a health communicator attracted more visitors to the department's career-related webpages.



Nancy Bishop Presented MASA Award

Recently retired State Pharmacy Director Nancy Bishop, R.Ph., was honored with the William Henry Sanders, M.D., Award of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama April 10 at the association's annual meeting in Montgomery. She is shown with Dr. Nina Ford Johnson, left, the association's president, and Dr. Greg Ayers, association president-elect. Created in 1966 in honor of Dr. Sanders, the award is presented to an outstanding individual who participates in full-time public health work and has served above and beyond their role.



DIS Staff Participate in Wiregrass Wellness Hub

The Southeastern District disease intervention staff represented the department in the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine's Wiregrass Wellness Hub on August 1. Rapid syphilis and HIV testing was offered in addition to STD awareness and prevention materials. Several ADPH-labeled items were used as incentives for the participants who were tested and those who stopped by the table to inquire about health department services. Pictured from left are Patricia Clark, STD Disease Intervention Manager; Elinda Thomas, DIS Senior; and Sheena Armstrong, DIS Senior.



Minority Health Month 2026

Wellness vendors displayed interactive and educational exhibits for National Minority Health Month. Vikash Achutaramaiah, known as the Voice of Water Music, performed at the event sponsored by the Office of Community Affairs in the RSA Park April 17.



CALENDAR SEPTEMBER

September 17 * 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (Central Time)

United for Maternal Mental Health,
Fatherhood & Community

Gift of Life Foundation's Infant
Mortality Conference

Presented virtually (Zoom)

For more information, visit www.golfound.org

September 17 * 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (Central Time)

Legal Documentation Program

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

Nurses Were Where They Were Meant to Be To Save Baby

Every year, we honor our nurses for the hard work they do on Nurse's Day.

This Nurse's Day, however, would not go according to plan for DeKalb County supervisor Shae Lawson and her staff nurses, Shelly Chapman and Mary Jo Reeves. They had planned to attend Nurse Instructional Day in Prattville, but

were unable to attend for different reasons. Proving that fate is sometimes greater than our plans, we end up where we are meant to be instead.

About 8:30 a.m., a concerned mom and grandmother thrust a baby at one of the clerks at the front desk of the DeKalb County Health Department. The baby was there for WIC, but had vomited and started to choke. As they have been trained, a Code Blue was activated, and the nurses responded immediately. When Shae arrived in the lobby, she was handed the unresponsive infant and was told, "We think he is choking." She and her staff immediately assessed the baby who was not breathing. Rescue measures were started, and emergency services were notified. The ambulance arrived a short time later, and much to the relief of everyone, the baby was breathing again and placed in the recovery position.

The baby continues to recover and improve and get the necessary medical care he needs. Baby's mom stated on social media: "Thank goodness we were around a bunch of nurses that knew what they were doing. Otherwise, I truly do not think we would be where we are right now."

Administration and nursing leadership agree. "Shae and her team are rock stars. She is a great leader and ensures her staff are prepared for anything. We truly believe it could have been a different outcome if it were not for Shae and her staff's actions that day. They were where they were meant to be."



DeKalb County Nursing Supervisor Shae Lawson and staff rescued an unresponsive baby.

UAB Medical Student Researches Preconception Care in Alabama

Rising second-year UAB Heersink School of Medicine student Darby Watford, a participant in the Medical Student Summer Research Pathways Program, conducted research in the area of preconception programs and presented the results of her chosen projects to healthcare professionals at the conclusion of the study on July 21.

Clinical faculty and collaborating mentors for the summer program participant were Amber Clark-Brown, Medical Director of the bureaus of Health Provider Standards and Home and Community Services; and Ana Oliveira, Dr.P.H., Epidemiologist, Supervisor, Office of Informatics and Data Analytics (OIDA).

Ms. Watford's research study was titled "Evaluation of a Preconception Care Program in Alabama."

Viewing and commenting on her presentations in Montgomery were Dr. Clark-Brown; Dr. Louis Lambiase, Regional Dean and Professor of Medicine at the Montgomery Regional Medical Campus of the UAB Heersink School of Medicine; and Dr. Scott Harris, State Health Officer.

This is the fourth year that ADPH has provided students in this program with an introduction to public health through a policy and research lens.



UAB MSSRP student Darby Watford, third from left, holds a certificate following her presentation. She is shown, from left, with Dr. Scott Harris, Dr. Amber Clark-Brown and Dr. Louis Lambiase.

Richard W. Burleson, Sr. Memorial Garden Dedicated

Friends, family and former coworkers attended a remembrance, dedication ceremony and reception held at the Elmore County Health Department on June 25 to honor former East Central District Administrator, Richard W. Burleson, Sr.

In his memory and as a part of his Boy Scout Eagle project, a troop member planted a lovely garden of red roses and shrubs, featuring an eagle fountain that faces a flagpole previously placed there by Richard's son, Richie Burleson.

The patriotic design of the garden is especially fitting. Richard was very active with Boy Scout Troop 185, serving in multiple roles, including Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop Committee Member, and Merit Badge Counselor.

Mr. Burleson concluded a 28-year career with the department, including more than two decades at the Central Office and later at the East Central District. He passed away on September 28, 2025.



East Central District Administrator Tim Hatch formally dedicates the memorial garden in Wetumpka.



Public Health Social Workers 'Uplift, Defend, Transform!'

In observance of Social Work Month 2026, public health social workers from across the state listened to engaging speakers when they convened at the Alabama Public Health Training Annex in Prattville on March 4.

State Social Work Director Bill Kennedy said, "We were very appreciative of Dr. Scott Harris joining us to provide a welcome and an update on public health. In addition, Gavin Graf and Crystal Taylor played a Family Feud game with the attendees, using questions related to social work."

The full agenda included the following presentations:

Navigating Legal Challenges

Sancha O. Howard, J.D., General Counsel, Office of General Counsel

The Honest Truth of the Social Worker's Touch

Amber Clark-Brown, M.D., Medical Officer, Health Provider Standards, Home and Community Services

Social Work Ethics: What's All the Buzz About?

William Kennedy, LICSW, State Social Work Director

Finding Balance in an Unbalanced World

Kenneth Harrison, B.S., Crystal Taylor, M.S., and Taylor Welch, B.S., Work Force Development



Northern District



Southwestern District

From Entry-Level Microbiologist to Laboratory Director—and a Few Points In Between: An Interview With APHL President Sharon Massingale

This article was originally written and published by the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL). It is being republished with permission. The original article can be found [here](#).

By Donna Campisano, APHL

Sharon Massingale's road to laboratory science was anything but straight—or smooth. There were bumps, twists and what she likes to refer to as “detours.” But one thing never wavered, and that was her persistence.

How did APHL's president go from teaching freshman biology courses to becoming an entry-level microbiologist and, finally, laboratory director of the Alabama Department of Public Health Bureau of Clinical Laboratories? Massingale sat down with us to share her inspiring journey—the highs, the lows and everything in between.

Detour #1: From RN to RNA

Massingale said her first “detour” came when she entered Alabama A&M University with the intention of studying nursing—one of only four careers she thought were a possibility. “All I knew was that you could be a lawyer, doctor, teacher or nurse,” she said. “Florence Nightingale was a real inspiration for me.”

But a college advisor—noting Massingale's excellent grades and a glut of nurses in the workforce—suggested medicine. She was put on a pre-professional track, preparing students for medical, veterinary or graduate school.

When Massingale's boyfriend at the time (who later became her husband) was less-than-enthusiastic about the med/vet school path, she set her sights on the third option: graduate school. But first, Massingale, who had been the valedictorian of her high school class, had to get through college, which was harder than she anticipated.

“There were 50 graduating students in my high school class,” Massingale said. “They didn't even offer biology or chemistry. And I had half a year of algebra. When I got to college, it was eye-opening. But I worked hard, and it turned out I loved the sciences.”

Massingale graduated with a bachelor's degree in zoology and chemistry, got married and entered graduate school at Tuskegee University to study biology. The woman who had never taken a biology class in high school became a research assistant at Tuskegee, working in one of the microbiology labs.

“The microbiology professor I was working with was a molecular scientist,” Massingale noted, “so I learned about gene cloning

and extracting DNA and RNA and how to operate different types of sophisticated laboratory equipment.

After she got her master's degree, Massingale stayed at Tuskegee as an associate researcher who also taught freshman biology classes. “God knows I loved teaching,” she said. “I'll never forget, I had two students who came to me at the end of the semester to thank me for teaching them. These students had gotten Cs in my class, but they told me it was their third time taking the course and the previous times they had gotten Fs. They said it was the first time they took the class and learned anything. Those Cs were like As to them.”



Detour #2: Turbulence hits

Massingale continued teaching at Tuskegee while pursuing a doctorate in microbiology at Auburn University, cashing in her retirement fund to pay for tuition. She was also raising two young children while her husband worked in real estate and served as a pastor.

But while she was out on maternity leave with her second child, Massingale's main professor, the one she was working with on her PhD, suddenly left the university without any explanation or communication. She was left floundering.

“I had finished my coursework and was finishing up my research, getting ready to graduate,” Massingale said. “And I was filled with so much anxiety. I drove up to Auburn, met with the new department head without an appointment, and said, ‘We need to talk about where I go from here.’ Ultimately, Massingale was able to continue her research with a new professor, but things once again turned stressful when that person also left the university.

The chair of the department stepped in again.

“He said, ‘Sharon, a lot of graduate students come in here and they not only want a ticket on the plane, but they also want to be the pilot. But I don't see you wanting to be the pilot. I see you wanting a ticket, and I have one if you want to get on the plane,’” she remembered as she choked back tears.

With that, the chair laid out a proposal where Massingale could merge her research with a project he was working on. She also received a research grant so she could give up her teaching job at Tuskegee and focus on writing her dissertation and finishing her degree.

Continued on page 13

Dr. Massingale, continued from page 12

When she graduated with her doctorate, Massingale was 40 years old.

Detour #3: A sticky note shows the way

With her PhD in hand, Massingale headed back to Tuskegee to teach biology classes. But when she got there, the plan had changed. In addition to teaching two lecture courses, the university had her overseeing 11 labs with no one to help her prep for experiments. And the subject wasn't biology, her real love—it was the physical sciences.

Massingale was becoming disheartened, especially with the long hours the lab work required, keeping her away from her family.

"It was another punch in the face," she said.

And then Massingale remembered a sticky note she had placed on a stack of papers as she was leaving Auburn.

One of her professors had given her the note with the phone number of someone at the Alabama Department of Public Health's Bureau of Clinical Laboratories. They were looking for an entry-level microbiologist. Knowing a state job with predictable hours would give her a better work/life balance, Massingale called, interviewed and got the job.

"The only other person in the building with a PhD besides me was the laboratory director," said Massingale, who worked running molecular tests for bioterrorism. "My boss kept introducing me as Dr. Massingale, but I put a stop to that. I just wanted to be known as Sharon."

Massingale rose through the ranks, becoming a senior microbiologist, a supervisor, manager, assistant laboratory director, and, finally, laboratory director. Today, she oversees about 145 staff in two state public health laboratory facilities.

To what does she owe her success? Massingale points to several things—her deep faith, hard work, good listening skills and knowing when to pivot.

"Public health professionals are resilient," she said.

"Laboratory professionals are resilient. And most certainly that's what my life has been about—resiliency. One of my disappointments is that my husband, my high school sweetheart whom I began dating at 17, is not here to share my joy as I take the reins as president of APHL. But I am blessed that the day after I received the gavel from outgoing president Dr. Scott Shone, I passed the baton to my daughter as she received her DrPH in social epidemiology at Mercer University. I feel as though all those detours created a full circle moment."

Some Firsts and Facts About Dr. Massingale

- First female Laboratory Assistant Director for the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL)
- First female laboratory director for the BCL
- First African American BCL director
- A native of Hurtsboro, Alabama, and current resident of Tuskegee
- Oldest of eight children
- Late husband was a pastor/minister
- Mother of two
- Grandmother of two
- Enjoys reading, crafting, desktop publishing and gardening
- Gets pleasure from giving back to the community
 - Currently active in the AME church at local, state, and national levels
 - Member of the Tuskegee Chapter of the Links, Inc., with leadership roles
 - Member of the Tuskegee Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., with leadership roles

Protect Family and Community from Breast and Cervical Cancer With Information

Breast and cervical cancer affect thousands of women each year, but early detection and prevention can save lives. The Cancer Prevention and Control Division partnered with the Hispanic and Immigrant Center of Alabama and the Alabama Public Health Training Network to provide a webcast with information about the risk factors, warning signs, and steps women can take to protect their health. The program was presented in English and Spanish, to help share this important message. Participants learned why regular screenings, such as mammograms and cervical cancer screenings, are so important and how early detection is pivotal to determining the most effective treatment option. The program also explored some of the challenges that can make it difficult for individuals and families to access preventive healthcare, including fear, cost, and lack of awareness about available services. Most importantly, participants were provided information about the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program, Operation WIPE OUT Cervical Cancer, and ways to protect yourself from these cancers.



The unique webcast was presented by Nancy Wright and Daniel Novoa.

ALL Kids Helps Alabama Child Access Breakthrough Gene Therapy

The Alabama Department of Public Health is celebrating a significant milestone for one Alabama family after a child enrolled in the ALL Kids program became eligible to receive a newly approved gene therapy for a rare form of inherited deafness.

The child has profound hearing loss caused by mutations in the OTOF gene and was among one of the first patients eligible to receive Otarmeni™ (lunsotogene parvec-cwha), approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as the first and only gene therapy for genetic hearing loss. The therapy was approved by the FDA in April 2026 and is designed to address the underlying genetic cause of hearing loss rather than simply treating its effects.

The procedure was performed at Boston Children's Hospital, one of the original clinical trial sites for the therapy. The treatment is administered during a same-day surgical procedure.

"At ADPH, the mission of our ALL Kids program is to ensure Alabama's children have access to the care they need, including highly specialized treatments that may not be available close to home," said Dr. Karen Landers, Chief Medical Officer. "We are grateful this child has the opportunity to receive a therapy that offers new hope for children and families affected by this rare genetic condition."

The manufacturer, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, has announced it will provide the gene therapy at no cost to clinically eligible patients in the United States. Families may still be responsible for costs associated with the procedure and related medical care, depending on their insurance coverage.

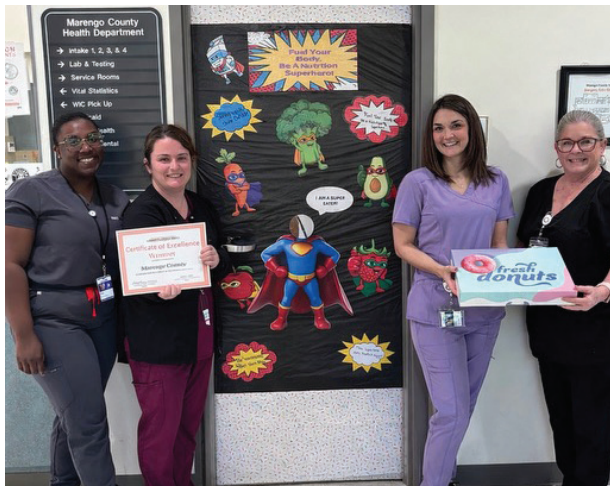
The [Alabama Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program](#) collaborates with the Alabama Care Coordination Program to ensure that all infants with hearing loss are identified as early as possible and receive timely and

appropriate audiological, educational, and medical intervention. In addition, the program collaborates with the Alabama Early Intervention System (AEIS) to ensure all infants with hearing loss are identified by three months of age and enrolled in AEIS before six months of age.

"This milestone demonstrates the importance of ensuring children have access to innovative medical care as new therapies become available," said Dr. Landers. "Through a shared commitment between the ADPH and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, we are proud that ALL Kids can help Alabama families access life-changing treatment options when medically appropriate. ADPH is grateful to the entire team at Boston Children's and its Department of Otolaryngology and Communication Enhancement for caring for this patient and others who will benefit in the future."



Andrew Tynes and his 16-month-old son Everett rest Boston Children's Hospital.
Photo by Jessica Rinaldi/The Boston Globe Staff



Marengo County Health Department's door wins the National Nutrition Month competition.

Door Decorations Make Healthy Eating Look Fun

The Southwestern District held a contest for National Nutrition Month, and the Marengo County Health Department's entry was judged the winner.

Illustrating the "Super Power of Nutrition (NNM)" theme placed a mirror as the Super Hero's (Super Eater) face.

One person remarked, "People sometimes have to see themselves accomplishing a nutrition goal and know they can do it!"

Brandy Daniels, Cortney Holden, Judy Williams and Ashley Rocker, and Judy Williams decorated the prize-winning door for National Nutrition Month. Atmore's entry took second place honors.

Child Health Providers Urged to Act: Incredibly Contagious Measles Causes Severe Illness and Death

Health Media and Communications webcast attendees learned about the critical importance of vaccine acceptance and tools they can use when they participated in “Measles: An Urgent Call To Action for Child Health Providers.” The program was sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Alabama Chapter, as well as the department.

The presenter, David W. Kimberlin, M.D., is Associate Vice President for Clinical Trials at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics, and Sergio Stagno Endowed Chair in Pediatric Infectious Diseases.

Kimberlin, who first saw measles as a medical student in Texas in the years 1989-1991, said, “Measles should have been in the rearview mirror instead of lanes in front of us.” Kimberlin said, and the infection spreads “like a heat-seeking missile.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the 2026 measles case total approaches 91 percent of the 2025 case count. The total number of confirmed cases in the United States as of June 11 was 2,288.

The highly effective Vaccines for Children program is critically important in creating a strong enough barrier that children, especially young children, are protected.

Key epidemiologic drivers behind recent measles outbreaks include the following:

- Declining vaccination rates at the national, state, and (especially) local levels,
- Misinformation
- Global travel patterns, including travel to U.S. neighbors in Canada and Mexico
- Gaps in community immunity



David W. Kimberlin, M.D.

Kimberlin explained the clinical presentation and complications of measles in children and assessed the broader public health consequences of measles outbreaks, including strain on health systems, school and childcare disruptions, and risks to vulnerable populations.

Evidence-based prevention strategies include MMR vaccination, community engagement, and effective communication approaches to address vaccine hesitancy.

Kimberlin concluded that acceptance of vaccination by the public is the only solution.

Office of Oral Health Promotes the #WatchYourMouth Campaign

The Oral Health Office promotes the #WatchYourMouth campaign to raise awareness of oral cancer and encourage regular screenings.

Governor Kay Ivey also proclaimed the month of April as Oral Cancer Awareness Month, noting that symptoms of oral cancer include persistent hoarseness or sore throat, earaches or enlarged lymph nodes of the neck, difficulty swallowing, and unexplained weight loss. The mouth may have unusual sores, swelling, and red or white lesions.

Factors which can increase the risk of oral cancer include any form of tobacco use, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco and snuff; alcohol consumption, whether moderate or heavy; prolonged sun exposure to lips; a weakened immune system; and a risk factor which has risen over the past two decades, oropharyngeal cancer related to the human papillomavirus (HPV).

Observational studies by the American Dental Association Council on Scientific Affairs find that HPV vaccination is associated with a greater than 90 percent reduction in oral HPV infection.



Bureau of Family Health Services staff members wore #WatchYourMouth T-shirts in launching the campaign to promote Oral Cancer Awareness Month.

Department Responds to Local Community

On July 20, the department responded to a request from a local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) to help provide potable drinking water to a community in need.

Gavin Graf, Center for Emergency Preparedness (CEP) director, advised that the community of Wilton had suffered a significant interruption to its drinking water supply. The community straddles the Shelby and Chilton County line.

Through the Chilton County EMA and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA), a WEBOEC request had been submitted for the deployment of water filtration equipment maintained by CEP. Because the affected population was believed to live in the West Central District, Graf advised that large water containers and a trailer containing the filtration equipment would be moved the following day to a Chilton County location.

The requested equipment was transported from the state warehouse and delivered to the Wilton Baptist Church parking lot in Montevallo, the distribution point for the public to obtain drinking water.

Upon arrival, Quinton Sawyer, Stanton Steele, and East Central District EP Director Willie Mason quickly began to set up the filtration equipment. In coordination with Chilton County Assistant EMA Director Derrick Wright and Mayor Deborah Hudson, a generator and a fire tanker from West Chilton Fire and Rescue soon arrived on scene to facilitate full operation of the equipment. Mason provided instruction to Wright on the operation and maintenance of the equipment. Once it was clear that Chilton EMA had the situation well in hand, and security and operational concerns were addressed, department staff left the scene with the intent of maintaining regular contact with Chilton EMA for any additional resource requests.



Baldwin County Health Department Environmentalist Miraculously Survives Severe Injuries, Faces Year-long Rehabilitation

When Public Health Environmentalist Robin Burcham left the job she loves in Robertsdales on a Tuesday afternoon, her life changed forever.

While driving home to Bay Minette on June 30, once arriving in town, a severe thunderstorm occurred, and a large tree fell on her car, trapping her inside. Firefighters began an hours-long rescue to save her life. They took precautions specific to hybrid vehicles to prevent an electrical fire before freeing her. Crews used foam to suppress the fire, dismantled part of the car's interior, removed the steering wheel, and cut through the vehicle to reach her in the rain. A longtime college friend said the EMTs were doubtful she would survive. She was airlifted to a Mobile hospital, where she coded twice.

Her close friend confirmed that her injuries are severe—multiple broken bones in both arms and hands, the right leg and ankle, and eight ribs, plus a degloving injury to her thigh. She underwent two procedures after arriving at the hospital. After 10 plus days, she had already undergone 10 procedures on her left leg, she has also received skin grafts, and various procedures on broken bones.

A long rehabilitation period means it could take as long as a year for her left leg to fully heal. She could begin to regain function in her broken bones within three to six months. Her physical independence is currently still challenged by the simplest daily task, and she has to depend on others to assist with every daily detail.

Robin has worked in the food and pool program in Baldwin County since July 2018. Southwestern District Environmental Director Greg Dunn said, "She is such a great young lady. Robin does not ever focus publicly on her dark moments but has such a wit and humor that always lifts others...can't help but smile. Her coworkers and clients love and miss her, and she can't wait to recover so she can get back to work."

William Cooey, a Baldwin County environmental co-worker and friend, has shared how positive Robin is about her condition. "Even when forced to face the various trials that life has thrown at her, Robin Burcham has always remained a ray of optimism," Cooey said. "It is the strength of her character that inspires her fellow coworkers, including myself, to not just be better employees but better people. We at ADPH are counting the days until she can return."

Robin lives alone with her cats. A confirmed "cat whisperer," she volunteers at a feral cat rescue organization, and has no immediate family nearby. Family members have been traveling from Birmingham to help care for her.

Linked below is a story that aired on a Mobile television station: fox10tv.com/2026/08/13/tree-crushes-bay-minette-womans-car-june-storm-friend-says-recovery-could-take-year/

Tabletop Exercise Prepares State and Local Staff to Combat Potential Drug-Resistant Gonorrhea

The Alabama Department of Public Health in collaboration with the Jefferson County Department of Health, conducted an Antimicrobial Resistant Gonorrhea Tabletop Exercise on July 27 at the ADPH Prattville Training Center.

The exercise provided the department and its partners with an opportunity to evaluate the state's preparedness to respond to an outbreak of antimicrobial-resistant gonorrhea and to identify opportunities to strengthen the Alabama Antimicrobial-Resistant Gonorrhea Outbreak Response Plan.

Participants included representatives from Nursing, Pharmacy, the Bureau of Clinical Laboratory, the Office

of HIV Prevention and Care, the Division of Health Media and Communications, the Division of STD, and the Center for Emergency Preparedness, as well as the Jefferson County Department of Health and the Mobile County Health Department. Community healthcare partners, including Cahaba Medical Care and the UAB 1917 Clinic, also participated in the exercise.

The collaboration discussions and recommendations generated during the exercise will be used to enhance statewide response coordination and to improve the Alabama Antimicrobial-Resistant Gonorrhea Outbreak Response Plan.



An interdisciplinary group of employees participated in the tabletop exercise.

Resources Shared at River Region Consumer Appreciation and Wellness Fair

The Montgomery Independent Rights and Resources Center held a River Region Consumer Appreciation and Wellness Fair at the Riverfront Pavilion on May 20. The department was represented at the event by the Bureau of Home and Community Services, the Office of Community Affairs, and the Center for Emergency Preparedness where information and resources were shared with the Independent Living Center's consumers. Juvonia McCain, shown, is among those who staffed a tent at the event. Montgomery Independent Rights and Resources' mission is to empower individuals with disabilities by providing the resources, support and community connections they need to thrive.



HHA Program Helps Participants Manage High Blood Pressure

In January 2026, the Cardiovascular Health Program launched a new program called Healthy Heart Ambassador (HHA), a 4-month-long Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program.

The HHA program is designed to help adults with hypertension, commonly called high blood pressure, manage it better by learning to correctly self-monitor their blood pressure at home with the help and encouragement of a trained HHA facilitator.

In Alabama, approximately 45 percent of adults have been told they have high blood pressure, which is much higher than the national average. This is a serious concern because of the links to cardiovascular disease, stroke, dementia, chronic kidney disease, and metabolic syndrome.

Over the course of the program, HHA facilitators work with participants on measuring and tracking blood pressure, making heart-healthy food choices, and more. At no cost, HHA participants will:

- Receive 4 months of personalized support from HHA facilitators.
- Learn how to properly take and record their blood pressure at home.
- Meet individually with an HHA facilitator twice a month.
- Measure and track their blood pressure at least twice a month.
- Attend monthly group nutrition education seminars.
- Receive weekly e-mails with health messages, tips, reminders, and encouragement.

With support from the East Central and Southwestern District Administration, the program kicked off in Montgomery at the Montgomery County Health Department and in Selma at the Dallas County Health Department.

Currently, the program is being offered in two additional health department locations: Houston County and Lowndes County. There are a total of 24 participants in the program at present, including four graduates.

To participate, an individual must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Have been diagnosed with high blood pressure or currently take antihypertensive medication
- Not have experienced a cardiac event within the past 12 months
- Not have atrial fibrillation or other arrhythmias
- Not have or be at risk for lymphedema

Molly Killman, director of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, said, "HHA staff are working to establish new partnerships for referrals and seeking community-based locations for implementation. Input and support from other ADPH programs in these locations are welcome. Please help

the HHA program by promoting it to colleagues who routinely see clients with high blood pressure and recruiting/ and/or referring new participants."

Please contact Ms. Killman at 334-206-5646 with any questions.



Sherronda Wilson



Tina Williams



Karen Merriwether



Sandra Cowan

TB Staff Development

TB and Women's Health was the subject when Dr. Olusunmisola Oyesiku spoke at the 2026 TB Staff Development April 21 in Prattville. Other topics covered in the training were case presentations, policies, finance, lab guidelines/updates, and Cure MD.



Alabama's Cervical Cancer Prevention Program Highlighted in Professional Publication

Twenty years ago, the HPV vaccine was approved with the goal of eliminating cervical cancer; the world has never eliminated a type of cancer. In celebrating this anniversary, an article in a University of Minnesota Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) publication highlights the accomplishments of the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Program, Operation WIPE OUT Cervical Cancer, and our colposcopy programs. The article is by Liz Szabo, an investigative reporter with the national, nonprofit newsroom focused on infectious diseases.

Nancy Wright, M.P.H., Director of the Cancer Prevention and Control Division, stated, "I loved having the opportunity to share Alabama's efforts to eliminate cervical cancer in Alabama through Operation WIPE OUT. There are so many partners within ADPH that not only support these efforts, but directly impact increasing HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and follow-up/treatment. From the Immunization Division which promotes HPV vaccination, to county health departments and nurse practitioners who screen and provide colposcopies, to the Office of Community Affairs, which helps spread the word, we are all working toward an end to cervical cancer."

In the article, Alabama is credited with leading the way by becoming the first state to launch a strategic plan to eliminate cervical cancer by 2033. Wright shared the initiative focused on increasing education, vaccination, screening, and appropriate follow-up care. Colposcopies are crucial because they allow healthcare providers to take a closer look at suspicious lesions and, if needed, collect tissue samples, which can reveal whether the growth is malignant, benign, or precancerous.

Regrettably, a UAB study finds that more than 40 percent of women fail to return for critical follow-up colposcopies, and rates are even higher among Black and Hispanic women. The article describes effective actions to address that follow-up gap. The department [bought handheld medical devices](#) that allow nurse practitioners to perform follow-up exams anywhere in the state. Last year, six nurse practitioners performed 1,000 colposcopies, boosting the percentage of women receiving follow-ups to 70 percent, Wright said. About one in four women examined had high-grade cervical lesions, putting them at elevated risk for cancer.

HPV causes more than 99 percent of cervical cancers, as well as five other types of cancer, the article notes. A safe and effective vaccine can prevent infection with HPV, and prevention is essential. Studies have shown that HPV vaccines have reduced the risk of cervical cancer by 80 percent in women vaccinated by age 16 and by 66 percent in those vaccinated after age 16. Vaccinating children earlier is even more effective. A study in Scotland found no cases of cervical cancer among women vaccinated before age 14.

Other states aim to follow Alabama's example on cervical cancer. Earlier this year, Louisiana [launched its own elimination program](#). Wright has also advised public health leaders in [Florida](#), Kentucky, [Mississippi](#), North Carolina, [Oregon](#), [South Carolina](#), [Texas](#), and Wisconsin.

The full article is available at the following: cidrap.umn.edu/human-papillomavirus-hpv/hpv-vaccines-allow-nations-states-set-deadline-eliminating-cervical-cancer

A HPV/PAP TEST LASTS 5 MINUTES.



THE IMPACT OF CERVICAL CANCER LASTS A LIFETIME.



GET SCREENED TODAY!

*Schedule your HPV/PAP test and
reduce your risk of Cervical Cancer!*



NO INSURANCE? You may be able to get **free or low-cost screening** through the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. For a referral or eligibility info: scan QR code, call **1-877-252-3324**, or visit alabamapublichealth.gov/bandc.

Essential Tick Prevention Tips for Hunters



Use Skin Repellents Properly:

Apply EPA-registered insect repellents containing 20–30% DEET or Picaridin on exposed skin.



Wear Protective, Light-Colored Clothing:

Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Light colors (like beige or light camo) make it easier to spot ticks crawling on you.



Create Physical Barriers:

Tuck pants into socks or boots and tuck shirts into pants to prevent ticks from crawling up your legs.



Treat Clothing with Permethrin:

Apply 0.5% permethrin spray to boots, clothing, and hunting gear (backpacks, ground blinds) before the season starts. Don't worry about the smell.



Manage Gear and Clothing:

Ticks can survive wash cycles. Place hunting clothes in a dryer on high heat for at least 10–60 minutes to kill ticks.



Check Pets and Game:

Use veterinarian-recommended tick prevention on hunting dogs. When dressing game, wear gloves and check yourself again, as ticks may move from the carcass to you.

ALABAMA
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For more information on tick-borne diseases and how to prevent them, visit alabamapublichealth.gov/tick or cdc.gov/ticks.