

ALABAMA'S HEALTH

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REDUCED TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19 IS HOPEFUL, GREATER VACCINE CONFIDENCE ENCOURAGED

The milestone of 2.5 million Alabamians receiving one or more doses of COVID-19 vaccine has been surpassed and fewer people are contracting the virus, yet more widespread acceptance of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines is needed to further protect people's health and Alabama's healthcare system. Many fully vaccinated individuals, especially seniors, are returning to county health departments and other vaccination sites for their third and booster doses. However, too few residents have yet to get their primary vaccine, even as COVID-19 continues to take a toll on the citizens of Alabama. Moderate community transmission is occurring which means that hundreds of state residents are hospitalized, including some pregnant women and children, and COVID-19 deaths continue.

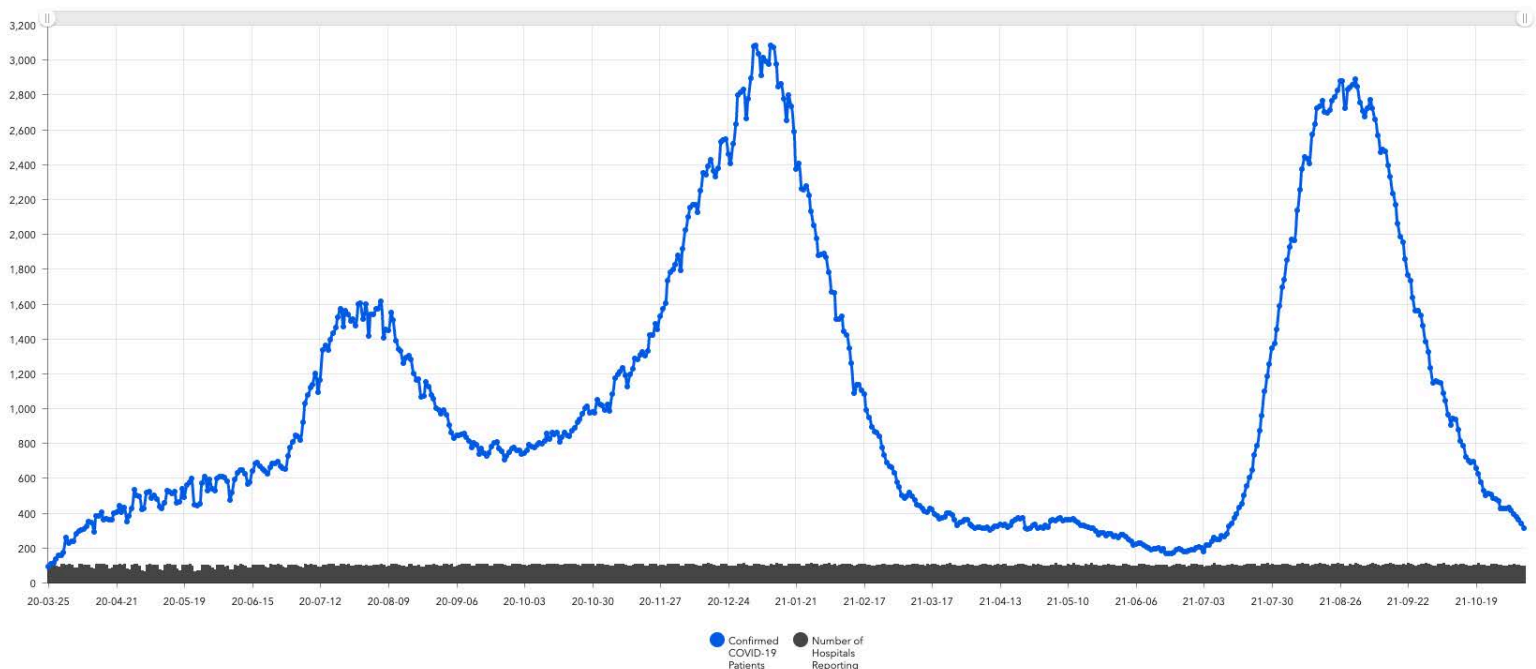
As of October 29, COVID-19 deaths in Alabama totaled 15,532. Deaths from COVID-19 in 2021 to date (8,345) have

exceeded deaths in 2020 (7,187). One in 330 Alabamians has died due to COVID-19, and for the first time since records have been kept, there were more total deaths than births in the state in the year 2020.

High rates of vaccination are necessary to protect the community from disease, and department initiatives to encourage and facilitate vaccination continue. COVID-19 vaccination clinics have been made available every day in every county health department, news media and social media messages are communicated daily, and community outreach includes serving the homebound and people in confinement facilities. Multiple media briefings, weekly television and radio interviews, town halls, webinars and meetings are being held. COVID-19 vaccinations are offered

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Daily Hospitalizations of COVID-19 Patients



Vaccine, continued from page 1

at multiple venues such as fairs, with some locations offering rewards for people getting vaccine.

As transmission of the highly contagious delta variant surged from late July through September, emergency room visits were requested only for true emergencies. COVID-19 vaccination was urged before, during, and after pregnancy and while breastfeeding. Clear and consistent guidance was given for schools in an online interview with district medical officers in a new YouTube video and an online document. For hospitals in areas where the needs were greatest, Alabama National Guard teams and vendors, federal partners and others were called in to augment staff. When monoclonal antibodies became a scarce resource, the federal government mandated that health departments manage their distribution, and this change was accomplished seamlessly through the Pharmacy Division and others.

Summer and autumn promotional efforts had an Alabama flair. A department-sponsored TikTok Contest promoted vaccinations before the start of the school year. Adolescents and young adults between the ages of 13 and 29 were eligible for the contest and submitted TikTok videos which showed themselves getting vaccinated or explaining their reasons for becoming vaccinated. Criteria used in judging the entries were creativity, originality and popularity (likes and shares). Imaginative video entries demonstrated the importance of getting a COVID-19 vaccination.

A KICK COVID vaccination and testing campaign began in partnership with the Bruno Event Team. The objective of KICK COVID is to promote vaccinations and education regarding vaccine efficacy by leveraging the state's passion for college football. The statewide campaign offered COVID-19 vaccinations and testing in prominent locations at select home games for each Football Bowl Subdivision/Football Championship Subdivision football program in the state. Each school has a dedicated promotional campaign targeted to both fans and students, with student athletes being a significant part of the campaign messaging and promotion.

Pertinent conferences, trainings and educational programs were conducted including those to assist people with disabilities, women, and victims of human trafficking. Department medical officers worked with organizations such as the Medical Association of the State of Alabama and the American Academy of Pediatrics, Alabama Chapter, to counter misinformation and disinformation about masking adherence, COVID-19 therapeutics, and vaccine safety.

For many people, COVID-19 fatigue is again setting in, and many people are abandoning simple precautions. Yet as experience from past months has demonstrated, the course of the virus is unpredictable. Caution is especially necessary as there is uncertainty because of Alabama's low vaccination rate.

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, MULTIPLE MEDIA OUTLETS INTERVIEW HEALTH OFFICIALS

International news media were interested in Alabama's approach to mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Media from Agence France Presse interviewed State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris on June 29. National, state and local news media also made frequent inquiries of public health officials for daily reporting.



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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TELEVISED COVID-19 PHONE BANK HELPS ALLAY VACCINE CONCERNS

On June 22, WSFA 12 News, the department, and the Medical Association of the State of Alabama came together to answer questions from the public about COVID-19 through a phone bank. Local doctors including State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mary McIntyre answered the phones and fielded questions about COVID-19 and the vaccines. The event helped allay concerns about vaccine safety from several callers. Special clinics at the Montgomery County Health Department followed on the next day.



SHOALS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENTS DR. KAREN LANDERS THE HELEN KELLER HOSPITAL HUMANITARIAN AWARD

The Shoals Chamber of Commerce hosted the Spirit of the Shoals Awards on October 15 to celebrate the successes of businesses and the community in the Shoals area of the past two years, and honored individuals working towards the betterment of the community.

Dr. Karen Landers, Medical Officer for the Northern and Northeastern Public Health Districts, was among the recipients honored in eight different categories. She received the Helen Keller Hospital Humanitarian Award. This award is presented to an outstanding volunteer or employee who has selflessly served the Shoals community and worked diligently to create a better quality of life in the Shoals.



Shown, left to right, are Olivia Bradford, Director of Communications and Events for the Shoals Chamber; Dr. Landers; Caitlin Holland, President of the Shoals Chamber; and Kyle Buchanan, President, Helen Keller Hospital.

ENSURING COVID-19 VACCINE SITE ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND FUNCTIONAL AND ACCESS NEEDS IN ALABAMA

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), in partnership with the Alabama National Guard (ALNG), Alabama's Emergency Management Agency, and other stakeholders, scheduled mass vaccination clinics in 24 traditionally underserved, rural counties in the state that were identified as high-risk of adverse health outcomes from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the significant population of adults with functional and access needs/disabilities in the state (over 33 percent), the differences in health outcomes and behaviors experienced, and the high incidence of death associated with contracting COVID-19, the functional and access needs population was a priority for vaccination. Accommodating, communicating with, and ensuring accessible vaccine sites for the disabled community was also a priority.

As such, the ADPH, along with the Disability and Preparedness Specialist from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), provided Disability Etiquette Training to approximately 150 members of the Alabama National Guard on March 16, 2021, at the ALNG Headquarters in Montgomery.

ADPH, in partnership with Anna Taylor from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, provided a 30-minute training session: Accommodating and Communicating with People with Disabilities. Prior to the start of training, a fun video was shown to ensure attendees were comfortable with the subject matter – “Interacting and Communicating with People with Disabilities,” which depicted various scenarios of what to do, and what not to do, when interacting with persons with disabilities/functional and access needs. Additionally, packets of information were provided to session attendees that could be used as reference tools at the vaccination sites. Some of these resources included:

- **Communication Card** for persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in case there was no access to a remote American Sign Language provider. The Communication Card was adapted from the New Jersey Department of Health's Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing and its development received input from consumers in Alabama's deaf and hard-of-hearing communities.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine Story** inserts, written in plain language, were provided as a resource for potential encounters with persons with cognitive or intellectual disabilities who needed explanation of what to expect during the vaccination process.

- **Accessibility Checklist**, adapted from the Minnesota Department of Health and ADA Northwest, was developed to ensure the sites were accessible physically, sensorily, cognitively and technologically. The Accessibility Checklist was used at scheduled vaccination clinic sites.



Felecia Barrow, MPA

Accessibility site assessments were conducted prior to the vaccination clinics, where a team of four—which included two ALNG Operations/Logistics Team members; Alabama Department of Transportation staff and ADPH/ASTHO Disability and Preparedness staff, conducted the assessments along with local emergency management agency staff and city/county officials.

For drive-through clinic sites, it was common to establish a special lane or designated area for paratransit vehicles or vehicles transporting people with disabilities/functional and access needs to avoid waiting in long lines to mitigate the challenges experienced when sitting in vehicles for long periods of time. Additionally, the accessibility site assessments ensured accessible Port-O-Lets were available when there were potential barriers with accessible restrooms.

For walk-up sites, there were designated areas for persons with functional and access needs/disabilities to sit comfortably while vaccine paperwork was completed, their vaccines were received, and their observation time done, all in one area. There were private rooms available for those with sensory disabilities, where noise, long waits, crowds of people and other stimuli considered barriers could be avoided. Additionally, the private rooms were used for those with challenged English proficiency to access the Language Line for interpreters.

Finally, transportation arrangements were made for people with disabilities, through a partnership with the Alabama Department of Transportation, for public paratransit vehicles and private accessible vans in each of the counties where clinics were held.

By Felecia Barrow, MPA

RECOGNITION MADE TO ALABAMA NATIONAL GUARD AND OTHERS FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE

Governor Kay Ivey activated the Alabama National Guard to set up mobile sites to bring COVID-19 vaccinations to underserved and rural communities throughout the state. More than 100 service members including doctors, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, medics, planners, logisticians

and administrative personnel transported, set up, and moved the voluntary vaccination clinics. Awards were presented to the Alabama National Guard and others at a luncheon and awards ceremony at the Alabama Activity Center in Montgomery on July 2.



Deputy Health Officer Dr. David Hicks, accepts an award for the Jefferson County Department of Health from Dr. Scott Harris.



Command Sergeant Major Rasmussen accepts an award for the Alabama National Guard from Dr. Scott Harris.

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Dr. David Hicks, right, presents Jamey Durham with a coin to recognize his hard work supporting the COVID-19 response efforts.



The American Association of Retired People presented an award to State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris. Bill Kennedy, left, accepts the award on his behalf.



Shila McKinney accepts a certificate of appreciation from State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris.



Meagan Titus receives an award for Lowe's Home Improvement from Dr. Scott Harris.

MISS ALABAMA HELPS KICK COVID

In September, Miss Alabama 2021 Lauren Bradford joined the fight to KICK COVID at college football games.



COVID-19 INCREASES RISK OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Renee Carpenter, director of Social Work Services at Camille Place, made a presentation, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Human Trafficking Satellite, Webcast and Facebook Conference" to nursing, clerical, nutrition and social work employees on October 29. Among the messages communicated was that efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 have also caused a greater risk of exploitation to vulnerable populations through trafficking. It was noted that human trafficking is the fastest growing illegal activity in the world and ranks second only to the illegal drug trade.

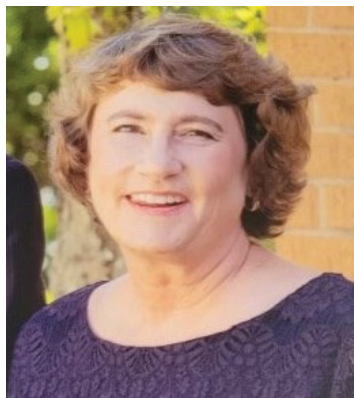


Renee Carpenter,
LICSW, PIP

IN MEMORIAM

Long-time department employee Dana Driscoll passed away on October 23 in Montgomery. Coworkers in the Bureau of Children's Health Insurance said their hearts are heavy as they remember the impact she had on their lives. They are comforted knowing that her faith was strong.

Mitch Jameson Wright, age 48, of Sheffield, passed away October 12. As a disease intervention specialist working in STD in the Northern Public Health District, he took his role seriously. His obituary noted that he worked at the Alabama Department of Public Health with his best friend Rhonda Jones. Survivors include his widow Katie, his parents Waylon and Sharon Wright, and countless precious friends and chosen family.



Dana Driscoll



Mitch Wright



MAJOR JAMES STALLWORTH ENDS COVID-19 MISSION WITH MOBILE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

When Mobile County first began to feel the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alabama Army National Guard stepped in to embed a medical advisor to the Mobile County Health Department. Assigned to the post on April 20, 2020, was Major James Stallworth.

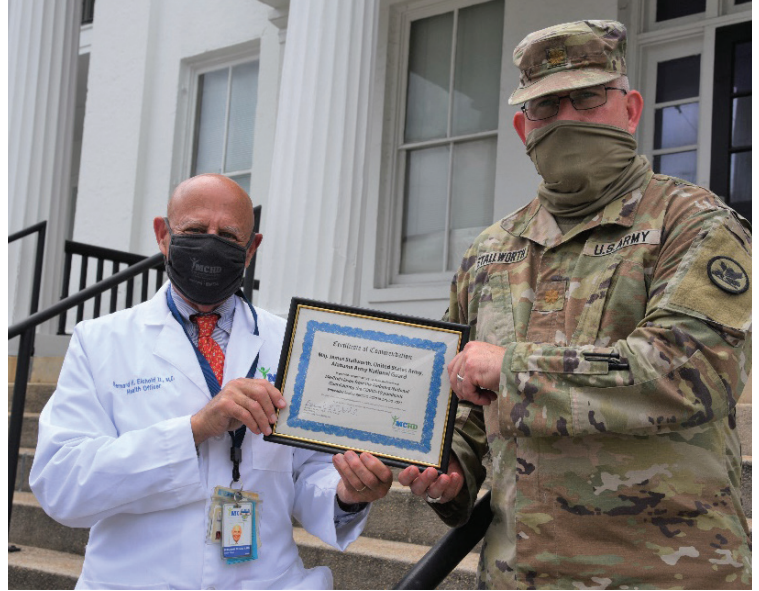
The selection was a perfect fit. Just prior to being activated, Major Stallworth became a Certified Family Nurse Practitioner. He has been a Registered Nurse at South Baldwin Regional Medical since 2002.

"I really didn't know what to expect when I was directed to assist the Mobile County Health Department last year," said Major Stallworth, who is currently the commander of the Medical Detachment of Alabama. "I had very limited experience with public health, and I was to learn what an asset you are to Mobile County and the surrounding areas.

"I really appreciate your patience, guidance, and expertise. This has been one of the most beneficial and meaningful deployments that I have ever had."

Major Stallworth's tour with MCHD came to a close on July 21. Dr. Bernard H. Eichold II, Health Officer of Mobile County, presented the major with a certificate of commendation for his work in helping to stem the spread of COVID-19.

"Major Stallworth is an outstanding soldier and nurse practitioner," Dr. Eichold said. "He eagerly engaged with



Dr. Bernard H. Eichold II, Health Officer of Mobile County, presented the major with a certificate of commendation for his work in helping to stem the spread of COVID-19.

various members of the community. He helped with logistics and organized clinical delivery of vaccine to patients."

Major Stallworth said he plans to start working as a Family Nurse Practitioner soon after leaving active duty.

By J. Mark Bryant, Mobile County Health Department



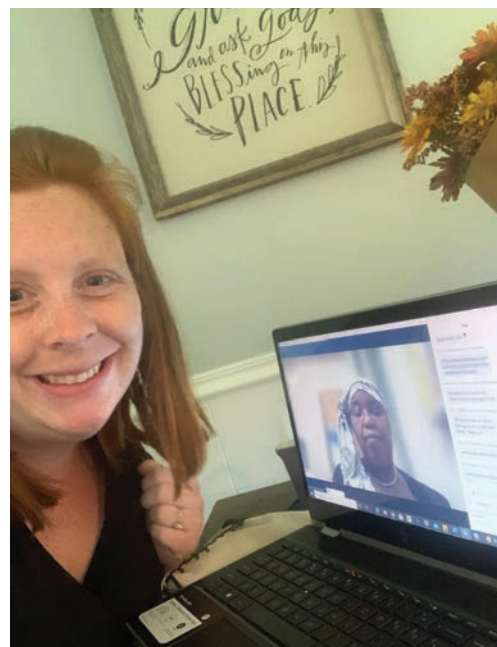
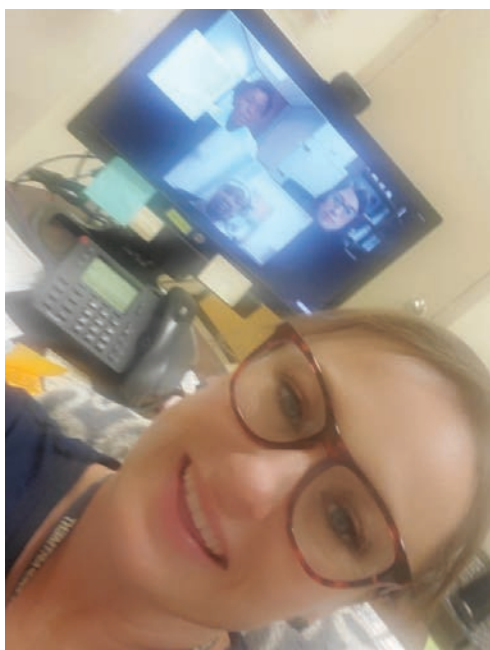
alcovidvaccine.gov

ALABAMA
PUBLIC
HEALTH

IMM
IMMUNIZATION DIVISION

PROMOTING BETTER BIRTH OUTCOMES: 2021 INFANT MORTALITY SUMMIT PROVIDES THE TOOLS

The Fourth Annual Infant Mortality Summit September 9 proved both educational and engaging in its virtual format. The conference, titled "Strengthening Communities: Tools to Promote Better Birth Outcomes," included presentations on the current status and emerging developments in infant and maternal health for its multidisciplinary audience. Attendees made and sent screen shots of themselves participating in the summit. Screenshot images are shown here. The conference was again sponsored by the Gift of Life Foundation, Inc., Birmingham Healthy Start Plus and the department.



RETIREES

The following departmental employees have retired recently:

APRIL

Dawn Bickley

Southeastern Public Health District

Ivory Bowe

Clinical Laboratories

Kathleen Ricks

East Central Public Health District

Truman Williams

Radiation Control

MAY

Gladys Ackles

Northeastern Public Health District

Victoria Brady

Field Operations

Leslie Britt

Financial Services

Angela Daniel

Family Health Services

William Elmore

West Central Public Health District

Sharon Franklin

East Central Public Health District

Deborah Grim

Southeastern Public Health District

Donna Hall

Southwestern Public Health District

Cathy Lasource

Southwestern Public Health District

Beverly Morgan

Health Care Facilities

Susan Norman

Infectious Diseases and Outbreaks

JUNE

Michael Clinkscates

Environmental Services

Cynthia Davis

Financial Services

Cornelius Maryland

Radiation Control

Myra McClain

Southeastern Public Health District

Angela McCray

Health Care Facilities

Connie Morrow

Northeastern Public Health District

Danita Rollin

Clinical Laboratories

JULY

Carolyn Andreu

Health Care Facilities

Senetta Arrington

Health Care Facilities

Dennie Bruer

Southeastern Public Health District

Shirley Jones

Northeastern Public Health District

Deannie Morris

Clinical Laboratories

Connie Pavelec

Health Care Facilities

Shannon Searcy

Southeastern Public Health District

Ella Tunstall

Northeastern Public Health District

Public Health District

AUGUST

Michael Lindsey

Northeastern Public Health District

Earnest Long

Clinical Laboratories

Elizabeth Morgan

Northeastern Public Health District

Belinda Rice

Northern Public Health District

Josephine Wright

Northern Public Health District

SEPTEMBER

Traci Dailey

Clinical Laboratories

Paula Hall

Administration

Gary Hodge

Northern Public Health District

Deborah Jones

Southwestern Public Health District

Karla Legg

West Central Public Health District

Lori Nesmith

Southwestern Public Health District

Carol Pharr

Northern Public Health District

Maria Richards

Northern Public Health District

SEPTEMBER

Traci Dailey

Clinical Laboratories

Paula Hall

Administration

Gary Hodge

Northern Public Health District

Deborah Jones

Southwestern Public Health District

Karla Legg

West Central Public Health District

Lori Nesmith

Southwestern Public Health District

Carol Pharr

Northern Public Health District

Maria Richards

Northern Public Health District

OCTOBER

Melanie Aldeen

West Central Public Health District

Vonda Buckhault

Southwestern Public Health District

Judith Holloway

Southeastern Public Health District

Joyce Purvis

Southeastern Public Health District

Dawn Richardson

West Central Public Health District

Sharon Taylor

Northern Public Health District

Rene White

Northern Public Health District

FREE PROSTATE CANCER SCREENINGS PROVIDED TO 121 IN HUNTSVILLE

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among men in the United States, and the Urology Health Foundation provided free prostate cancer screenings at the Madison County Health Department on July 13. Men age 40 and older were invited, and 121 participated.



SOCIAL WORK CONFERENCE EMPHASIZES NEED FOR SELF-CARE

The importance of public health social workers during the pandemic was underscored at the 2021 Social Work Conference, "Social Workers Are Essential," September 15 at Alabama State University's J.G. Hardy Student Center Ballroom in Montgomery.

Alabamians are in an unprecedented crisis dealing with COVID-19, and the conference emphasized that the neglect of self-care by social workers can result in their diminished resilience and capacity. Challenges for social workers often come from working with clients to meet their needs for intervention services, especially with limitations as a result of COVID-19.

Timely topics on the agenda included the following presentations from professionals outside the department:

Pause: Crisis Leadership and Self-Care

Jennifer Blair Foster, MDiv, Heritage Baptist Church, Minister of Family Discipleship and Administration

NASW Code of Ethics: From 1960 to Now

Dr. Onick O. Lewis, MSW, EdD, Troy University, School of Social Work and Human Services

Who are You? Remembering Who You Are As a Social Worker

Kai Mumpfield, LICSW, PIP, Alabama Board of Social Work Examiners, Chair of Board and Director of Field Education, Alabama State University

Also addressing the group were State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris and Brent Hatcher, Director of the Office of Human Resources, who spoke on the topic: Supervision and the Development of Values and Responsibilities.

State Social Work Director Bill Kennedy noted that due to the pandemic special recognition of individual social work professionals did not take place again in 2021.



Jennifer Blair Foster speaks about practices to help meet the many demands of public health social workers.

PASSION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH DRIVES NEWLY APPOINTED DISTRICT MEDICAL OFFICER TO SERVE

Public health is a passion for Dr. Wes Stubblefield, and he is realizing a dream in life as he takes on the position of medical officer for the Northern and Northwestern Public Health Districts. His academic and leadership credentials are impressive, and his awards and honors are many.

As a practicing pediatrician, he enjoyed making relationships and engaging in conversations one on one with parents and children over the past 14 years. He reached a point in his career, however, where he wanted to make a greater impact, and this led him to public health.

In addition to his pediatric experience, Dr. Stubblefield's influences included mentorship by Dr. Karen Landers, whose position he is assuming; leadership in the American Academy of Pediatrics, Alabama Chapter, for which he served as president from 2017-2019; and other training. In 2018 he completed his M.P.H. degree with a concentration in Health Care Organization and Policy from the UAB School of Public Health.

Dr. Stubblefield grew up in Vernon in Lamar County where his father was a dentist who had relocated to the rural area of west Alabama through a loan replacement program. Always a busy person, Dr. Stubblefield received his B.S. degree in biology in 1999 from David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., and his M.D. in 2004 from the University of Alabama School of Medicine. He completed a residency in pediatrics at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in 2007, and is board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics.

As to hobbies, one might find Dr. Stubblefield working in the yard or pulling up carpet in the 1920s-era home in Florence he and his wife Jennifer recently purchased and are in the process of renovating. Formerly they lived in a larger historic home, but they decided to move after their daughter, Peyton, left for Auburn University where she is a sophomore. In addition to working and reading, he enjoys exercise and even taught an exercise class at one time.



**Wes
Stubblefield,
MD, MPH,
FAAP**

Among the many elected and appointed positions listed on his extensive curriculum vitae which are or have been connected with the department are the following: STD Advisory Committee, Lauderdale County Medical Society, Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network to Reduce Infant Mortality (COIIN), Healthy Child Care Alabama, and Shoals Health Care Coalition.

In an e-mail to employees statewide welcoming him, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mary McIntyre expressed the enthusiasm of many others in the department when she wrote, "We are very happy and truly excited to have you come onboard."

The decision to make the move was reinforced for Dr. Stubblefield when he announced he was leaving his medical practice and others assured him many times over that public health is his calling. As he embarks on this journey, he is hopeful other professionals will join him on the "great career path" of public health.

ALABAMA VIOLENT DEATH REPORTING SYSTEM PROVIDES GRANT FUNDS TO DATA PROVIDERS

The Alabama Violent Death Reporting System (AVDRS) provided grant funds to data providers which provide data to the program. Funding was shared with the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiners' Office (JCCME) and the Montgomery Police Department.

JCCME Office used its funding to purchase dental equipment to assist in identifying unrecognizable victims of violent crimes. In fiscal year 2021, JCCME provided AVDRS with data for 260 violent death cases.

The Montgomery Police Department used its funding to purchase ballistic vests and tourniquets. The vests are provided to new graduates of the police academy. In many cases police officers are the first to arrive on the scene

when a victim is injured, and tourniquets are often used until emergency medical service personnel can arrive at the scene.

The program manager states these data providers are vital to the program, and without their support and information, AVDRS would not have the data needed to analyze violent deaths in the state.

AVDRS is a statewide surveillance program of violent deaths in the state and is a part of the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS). The overarching goal of AVDRS is prevention. In August, AVDRS completed a 5-year cycle of funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Renewed funding has been awarded to AVDRS for FY 22. In 2019 the state had 1,390 violent deaths.

AVDRS sits in the Bureau of Prevention, Promotion and Support.

TRENDLE SAMUEL SELECTED AS ONE OF ALABAMA'S TOP 10 NURSES

Region II Perinatal Coordinator Trendle Samuel of the State Perinatal Program has been chosen from a field of more than 430 nominees as one of Alabama's 10 Top Nurses. This recognition is presented by the social media site of Al.com, "This is Alabama" and BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama in cooperation with the Top Nurses Advisory Board and Alabama State Nurses Association which made the selections.

A registered nurse for the past 23 years, she loves her work and the opportunities it presents. "I get to advocate, to educate, to rehabilitate." During the past five years she has navigated the learning curve to public health from her 18 years of experience as a clinical nurse at DCH Health System and Whatley Health Services.

Now she works behind the scenes in a way she describes as being like "hidden figures," reviewing why patients become sick and how we can do things differently to prevent infant mortality and other bad health outcomes. In her position, she collaborates with agencies and organizations to try to understand mothers and families' experiences and make recommendations come to life.

Review teams may make a broad analysis of the mother's childhood and adulthood experiences to understand situations that lead to poor outcomes. For example, although there is a program available which provides cribs, there may be reasons a mother is not accessing this service, such as lack of space to place the crib or a stable residence.

"You have to be creative," she said. "Information – correct and incorrect – is passed down from generation to generation, so we work to be transparent and give real-life examples. Prevention needs to start way before kindergarten, and everyone needs to be treated with respect along the way."

Programs she champions encourage creativity, critical thinking, health, physical activity, social skills and interaction, and she has learned a lot about equity and health equity. Fellow community activists find her perspective to be eye opening--to see how things really are instead of just making assumptions about community needs in low-income communities. Two individuals with whom she worked closely on a community project nominated her for the Top Nurse recognition.

An example she found very rewarding occurred when she worked with public housing community residents to determine how to spend money from a grant. After speaking with the residents to determine their true needs and wishes, she learned that a children's playground was the greatest need in the Crescent East Apartment Community. The previous playground had been destroyed, and there were no plans to rebuild. There were obstacles--the community straddled the city and county lines and there were rumors that the public housing community might be torn down. But she worked with

others to help convince the housing authority to build a playground for neighborhood children, and with the grant, a new playground is now in the community.

A Montgomery native, the nursing career Mrs. Samuel chose was primarily inspired by the caring for others she witnessed through her own family. Although it was never really discussed with her, her great grandmother had been a "granny" midwife

before the practice was criminalized. Another influence on her healthcare career path was born by watching the *Cosby* Show on television and seeing the positive family life portrayed on the screen by an African American father who was a successful obstetrician and his attorney wife.

After high school graduation, she entered college at the University of Alabama as a premed major, but after considering other options she became interested in pursuing nursing. After a couple of years as a student nursing assistant, she began her employment as a registered nurse. As a wife and parent of daughters, ages 8 and 15, she is now enrolled in an online M.P.H. program with a focus in Health Education and Promotion at the University of Alabama, which allows her to pursue the graduate degree without traveling from home.

A YouTube video introduces the 10 outstanding Alabama nurses. In the video excerpt, Mrs. Samuel's indelible memory of the April 27, 2011, tornado which took the lives of hundreds and injured thousands was highlighted. On that day, she was on duty at DCH Regional Medical Center in Tuscaloosa.

She recounted her experience as follows: "I was moving babies away from windows in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) when I heard that we were about to have surgery to deliver a baby in L&D. I was the manager of L&D at the time, so I got them settled in the NICU and ran back to the operating room (OR) to assist them with the delivery. We knew the tornado was headed our way, so we had to move quickly. I can remember someone asking to open the blinds so we could see outside, and I told them that we did not need that distraction. The baby was delivered as the tornado was passing the part of the building where the OR is located. After it was over, we looked outside and could see the path of the tornado, and it had barely missed the building. I like to say that God took His hand and scooted it over because we were ushering in a new life at that time."



Trendle Samuel, RN, BSN, CLC

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WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

What is diversity*? The definition of diversity is broad. It includes legally protected categories (national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and family structure) as well as those characteristics that make individuals unique. Diversity encompasses differences among people concerning where they are from and where they have lived, as well as their difference of thought and life experiences. Being different from each other is a strength, not a weakness. It gives us a chance to see things differently. The divisions come in when differences are not respected and celebrated. Diversity means more than getting different people in the room; it also means celebrating and accepting their different perspectives.

Workplace diversity is a collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. It is more than a legal or moral imperative; it is a business imperative for public service.

What is inclusion*? Inclusion is a culture that connects each employee to the organization. It encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness, enabling all individuals to participate in the workplace and contribute to their full potential. Inclusion is when all your employees feel like they belong in your agency. That means they can voice their opinion where they do not feel excluded based on their identity, and that they see themselves reflected in the department's core values.

We strive to create an inclusive workplace where everyone feels valued and respected because their differences help achieve the department's mission.

To strengthen our workforce, we have implemented ADPH Lunch and Learn: Navigating the Application and Hiring Process for State Government. The session is conducted by Larry Sailes, Equal Employment Officer (EEO), who also serves as the recruiter for the department. This is a one-hour session offered to colleges and universities via WEBEX, Mobile Device or telephone. The purpose is to recruit from a diverse, qualified group of candidates to help the department to be innovative and productive in providing services to our clients. Employees who would like to advance in their career or pursue new opportunities within the department may contact Sailes for further information at (334) 206-5818.

Trendle Samuel, continued from page 13

The day was a long one, and in the aftermath of the tragic storm other family members of patients began coming in to the hospital seeking treatment and refuge. The husband of a patient had an injured leg that needed to be stitched up, and she was able to find a family medicine obstetrician to treat him. A 6-year-old girl on the pediatrics unit whose eye had been injured by a tree branch was missing her mother. As the child grabbed her neck and clung to her body, Mrs. Samuel



Employee Relations office staff consists of Sailes, EEO, and Cassandra Hawthorne, Office Manager, who joined the team on September 16, 2021. Employees wishing to schedule an appointment or consultation please call the office at (334) 206-9494. Even though the world of Employee Relations changes with time, the most important element for a successful relationship is communication.

*Definitions of diversity and inclusion are derived from original material produced by the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor, the Office of Personnel Management and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

"It's not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences." ~ Audre Lorde

By Employee Relations Officer, Danita Rose (EEO Coordinator)

carried the girl some distance in the crowded and chaotic hospital to locate the child's mother.

Reflecting on her recognition, Mrs. Samuel is excited and expressed her hopes for the future. She said, "All nurses are doing great things when they leave people healthier, but a lot of nurses have a hard time accepting recognition. I want to leave a legacy of caring and treating all people with dignity and respect. I hope that once I'm done with everything, all people aren't just treated equally but equitably and as the human beings that we all are."

PAULA HALL RETIRES

Administrative Support Assistant Paula Hall retired effective September 1 from Health Administration. State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris presents her a certificate in recognition of her service.



TELEHEALTH DEMONSTRATION MADE TO SAMFORD UNIVERSITY NURSE PRACTITIONER RESIDENTS

April Golson, director of the Office of Telehealth, made a presentation to a group of Samford University nurse practitioner residents October 15 to demonstrate the use of county health department telehealth carts. Telehealth opens up many possibilities to communicate with healthcare clinicians and receive treatment from providers who may be located hundreds of miles away.



EMPLOYEES RECEIVE HANDS-ON TRAINING IN DEPLOYING PORTABLE STRUCTURES

The East Central District hosted a training session September 27 to familiarize employees about how to rapidly deploy portable structures for use at drive-up clinics and in environments that may be far from local health departments.

After viewing an instructional video and with direction from the vendor, DLX Deployed Logix, staff practiced hands-on the removal of bins from a trailer, and setting up of the frame, canopy and flooring of the structures. Maintenance staff joined others from a variety of disciplines and participants from the Southeastern and West Central districts in practicing matching poles to grommets.

With teamwork and planning, structures that will keep healthcare providers safely out of the elements can be deployed within one hour. Community partners will be engaged and trained on a regular basis to assist in the process of setting up the structures.

WOMEN'S HEALTH UPDATE FOCUSES ON RESILIENCE

The Office of Women's Health Thirteenth Annual Women's Health Update was held virtually August 6, with the theme: "Women's Health During the Pandemic, A Focus on Resilience."

The purpose of the annual conference is to disseminate scholarly work that is aimed at improving the health status of all women. Topics this year included the pandemic, stress management, nutrition, complementary and alternative medicine, preconception care and mental health issues. The conference provides a venue for scholars from various disciplines to share their latest projects and research findings with colleagues.

SUDDEN UNEXPLAINED INFANT DEATH INVESTIGATIONS TRAINING HELD

When a child dies unexpectedly, a thorough investigation is needed to accurately determine the cause and manner of death. To train professionals in several disciplines about child injury and death scene re-enactment, the Alabama Child Death Review System (ACDRS) offered a series of two two-day training sessions in Child Injury and Death Scene Re-Enactment and Scene Reconstruction: Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Investigations (SUIDI) on August 16-17 at Jefferson State Community College in Birmingham and August 19-20 at Montgomery County Health Department in Montgomery.

These sessions provided SUIDI training for law enforcement personnel, emergency medical services personnel, district attorneys, district attorney support staff, medical examiners, coroners, social workers, nurses, and others working in child protective services. Participants learned the skills needed to provide investigations that will lead to a more accurate determination of the cause of injury and death. Retired Major Connie Shingledecker of the Manatee County Sheriff's Office was the presenter at the sessions.

ACDRS is located in the Behavioral Health Division of the Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support. For more information about ACDRS, please visit the www.alabamapublichealth.gov/cdr. Kimberly Gordon can be reached via email at Kimberly.Gordon2@adph.state.al.us or telephone at (334) 206-2085. Financial support was provided by the Alabama Department of Human Resources and the Children's Justice Task Force at no cost to attendees.



Attendees learned the skills needed to provide an investigation that will lead to a more accurate determination of the cause of injury and the persons responsible. Retired Major Connie Shingledecker of the Manatee County, Fla., Sheriff's Office was the presenter.

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 18 • 9 -11 A.M.

**Nurse Practitioner Fall Program
Alabama Department of Public Health
Family Planning/ Nurse Practitioner
Telehealth Training**

For more information, contact the Health Media and Communications Division, (334) 206-5618.

JANUARY 6 • 3 P.M.

**Statewide Staff
Meeting with the State
Health Officer**

For more information, contact the Health Media and Communications Division, (334) 206-5618.

APRIL 6-8

**64th Alabama Public Health
Association Education
Conference**

Montgomery Marriott Prattville Hotel and Conference Center at Capitol Hill, Prattville. For more information, visit alphassoc.org.

NEW MOBILE HEALTH AND TESTING UNIT WILL SERVE HOUSTON COUNTY

The new Houston Mobile Health and Testing Unit was delivered and set up in October. The unit was purchased through the Houston County Commission and Houston County municipalities through CARES Act and community development block grant funds.

Ricky Elliott, director of Field Operations, expressed his appreciation to District Administrator Corey Kirkland and all staff members for making it become a reality. He said, "This is a wonderful example of collaboration among local partners to meet the public health needs at the local level. The potential for this mobile unit is limitless."

One of the first uses of the unit will be for screening at the upcoming National Peanut Festival in Dothan. The unit is then scheduled to go to multiple senior centers in the county to hold COVID-19 and influenza vaccination clinics. In case it again becomes necessary, the mobile setup will also be used to conduct drive-through COVID-19 testing.



Pictured, left to right, are Southeastern District Administrator Corey Kirkland, Amy Richards, Susan Wiggins, Johnna Cotton, Sean Sawyer, Holly Dunn and Elizabeth Dean.

CHEERFUL QUOTATIONS GREET CEP WAREHOUSE EMPLOYEES DAILY, LIFT MORALE

Employee morale gets a little boost each morning when Angela Smith posts a positive quotation on the bulletin board at the Center for Emergency Preparedness (CEP) Warehouse in Montgomery. That's important for everyone at any time, but this administrative support assistant's inspiring sayings are especially appreciated on those nonstop work days when COVID-19 supplies and equipment must go out to meet the requests of the public health districts.

CEP Warehouse Manager Dan Foy said the CEP team works together to maintain and distribute state assets that are available based on emergency and disaster needs. The group goes above and beyond to ship items as soon as possible and are on call 24 hours a day should emergencies arise.

A considerable amount of supplies and valuable equipment are maintained at the warehouse under strict security, and unauthorized persons are not admitted.

Foy said that in addition to the posted sayings, "Angela's smile and laughter" contribute to improved employee morale. He also praised the mentoring and support of the team by their supervisor John Lowery, director of Logistics. The result is a positive work environment.



CEP Warehouse staff pictured, left to right, are Rick Thomas, John Gulley, Angela Smith, Chris Davis, John Lowery and Dan Foy.

HALLOWEEN CONTEST HELD, DONATIONS GO TO STATE COMBINED CAMPAIGN

Employees were invited to come to the twelfth floor corridor of the RSA Tower during their lunch break October 29 to make their selections of the best costumes, enjoy a photo booth and receive a complimentary candy bag. Proceeds benefit the State Combined Campaign. There were 19 costumed contestants, and voters selected three winners, pictured below.



Organizers of the First Annual OHPC RSA Tower Halloween Contest are pictured, left to right, Katie Brent, Coordinator Tiffany Wilson, Coronda Judkins, Summer Preg and Patricia Johnson-Smith.



First Place: Bradley Baker as Commodore of the Navy



Second Place: Rosie Evans as Bat Woman



Third Place: Tammy Langlois as a Wicked Witch

ONE PILL CAN KILL - COUNTERFEIT PILLS CAN BE LETHAL

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has warned the American public about the alarming increase in the lethality and availability of fake prescription pills containing fentanyl and methamphetamine. The department is seriously concerned that these pills are falsely marketed in Alabama as prescription drugs sold online or through social media and are intentionally made to look like legitimate drugs in size and color.

In a public safety alert, the DEA issued a new warning that international and domestic criminal drug networks are mass-producing fake pills which are killing unsuspecting Americans. These counterfeit pills are easy to purchase, widely available, and often contain deadly doses of fentanyl.

Pills purchased outside of a licensed pharmacy are illegal, dangerous and potentially lethal. The only safe medications are ones prescribed by a trusted medical professional and dispensed by a licensed pharmacist. Any pills that do not meet this standard are unsafe and potentially deadly, the DEA and ADPH caution.

More than 9.5 million counterfeit pills have been seized so far this year, which is more than in the last two years combined. Officials report a dramatic rise in the number of counterfeit pills containing at least two milligrams of fentanyl, which is considered a deadly dose. The number of DEA-seized counterfeit pills with fentanyl has jumped nearly 430 percent since 2019, a staggering increase. DEA laboratory testing further reveals that today, two out of every five pills with fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose. Additionally,

methamphetamine is increasingly being pressed into counterfeit pills.

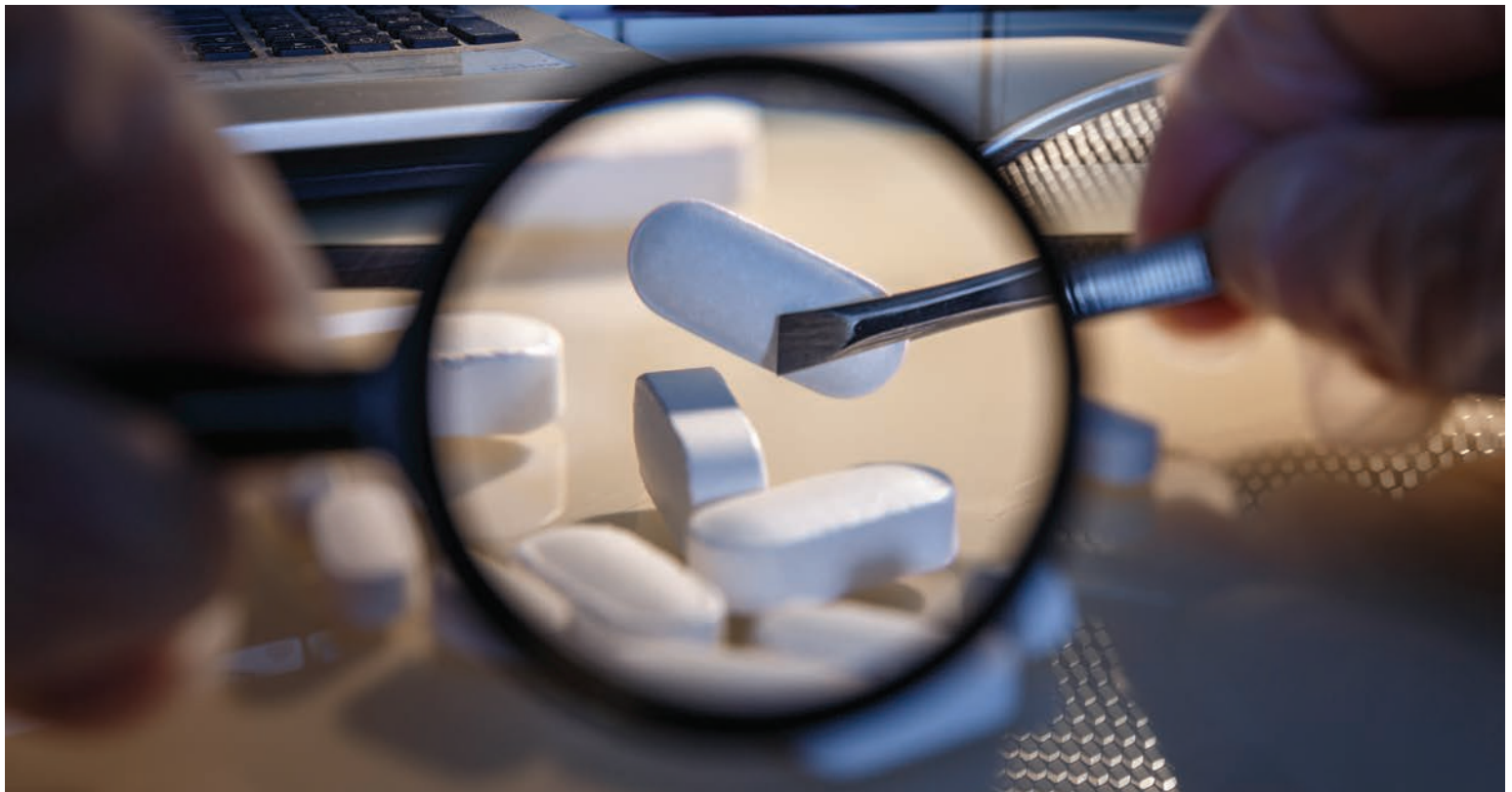
Some of the most common counterfeit pills made to look like prescription opioids include:

- Oxycodone (Oxycontin®, Percocet®),
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin®)
- Alprazolam (Xanax®);
- Stimulants like amphetamines (Adderall®).

Fake prescription pills are widely accessible and often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms – making them available to anyone with a smartphone, including teens and young adults. DEA reports that these counterfeit pills have been seized in every U.S. state, and in unprecedented quantities.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last year more than 93,000 people died of drug overdoses in the United States, marking the largest number of drug-related deaths ever recorded in a year. In 2020, 1,027 Alabama residents died from drug overdoses. Fentanyl, the synthetic opioid most commonly found in counterfeit pills, and its analogs are the primary drivers of this alarming increase in overdose deaths.

ADPH supports DEA's public awareness campaign, *One Pill Can Kill*, to educate the public on dangers of counterfeit pills and how to keep Americans safe. For more information, visit <https://www.dea.gov/onepill>.





WORLD AIDS DAY

DECEMBER 1

***ENDING THE
HIV EPIDEMIC:
EQUITABLE ACCESS,
EVERYONE'S VOICE***



know.
manage.
live.

