

ALABAMA'S HEALTH

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CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM DAY IN ALABAMA PROCLAIMED AND CELEBRATED

The Children's Health Insurance Program has provided better access to healthcare for children and teenagers and greater financial protection for Alabama families for the past 25 years, and the program marked this milestone with a festive anniversary celebration, which included a news conference and a reception in Montgomery.

Gov. Kay Ivey proclaimed October 14 as Children's Health Insurance Program Day in Alabama. Her recorded message, played at the news conference, applauded the universally popular program that has had a great impact on children's healthcare in the state.

"For the past 25 years, the Children's Health Insurance Program, known as ALL Kids in Alabama, has opened new doors to quality health care for more than 1.6 million children in our state by offering an excellent comprehensive health coverage plan," said Governor Ivey. "I want to congratulate the Alabama's Children's Health Insurance Program on reaching its silver anniversary and for making a positive impact on Alabama families. I have designated October 14 as Children's Health Insurance Program Day to celebrate this special occasion."

State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris stated, "This significant milestone could not have been reached without the cooperation of our partners and our CHIP team through the years. Before the program's initiation, at least 15 percent of Alabama's children were uninsured, and now Alabama ranks better in insuring children than the United States as a whole. We continue to strive to improve the health outcomes and lives of this vulnerable population."

Dr. Harris commended the leadership and continuity in the program which has significantly changed lives by providing access to care through insurance coverage. Former State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson and two former CHIP directors reflected on how the program has evolved and expanded despite challenges. Alabama's CHIP Program is the result of a partnership between the Alabama Department



of Public Health, the Alabama Medicaid Agency, and the Alabama Child Caring Foundation.

Other partners in the federal-state partnership include the medical community, the American Academy of Pediatrics, Alabama Chapter; the Alabama Academy of Family Physicians; Children's of Alabama, the University of South Alabama Women's and Children's Hospital, Alabama governors and legislators through the years, and many others including multiple Medicaid, Mental Health, and Rehabilitation Services commissioners, and numerous advocacy groups.

continued on page 2

CHIP, continued from page 1

As a result of provisions in the Affordable Care Act, in addition to the ALL Kids Program, CHIP also funds two groups of Medicaid-eligible children (MCHIP) and the program works collaboratively with Medicaid in a dual eligibility enrollment system which keeps the application process streamlined and easy for applicants to navigate offering the “no wrong door” approach.

Dr. Williamson, who led the department when the program was signed into law in 1997 until his retirement in 2015, said the goal of children’s advocacy groups from the outset was to insure as many eligible children as possible with minimal copays. He said, “Our coverage of children stands out as a shining beacon, and I am most grateful to have had a small part in it.”

Gayle Sandlin, the program’s founding director, called her career with CHIP a “phenomenal experience” and thanked Dr. Williamson and former Staff Assistant Kathy Vincent for their vision and determination to establish and maintain the program as a priority. Alabama was the first state in the country to have its CHIP plan approved. Early achievements included setting up program eligibility by declaration and an early push for an electronic application.

Alabama’s second CHIP Director, Cathy Caldwell, described the implementation of the program as “a collaborative process from day one;” praised “the passion, energy and commitment from so many entities” and the decision to make every policy decision family friendly.



Pictured at the proclamation signing are, left to right, Dr. Scott Harris, State Health Officer; Keith Wright, CHIP Program Services Director; Wanda J. Davis, CHIP Deputy Director; Tara Freeman, CHIP Program Operations Division Director; Governor Ivey; Dr. Karen Landers, Chief Medical Officer; Stephanie McGee Azar, J.D., Commissioner, Alabama Medicaid Agency; Gretel Felton, Director, Beneficiary Services, Alabama Medicaid Agency; and Catherine Molchan Donald, Public Health Administrative Officer and Acting CHIP Director.

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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Proclamation

By the Governor of Alabama

WHEREAS, children need to be healthy to reach their full potential and need to receive regular checkups, vision and dental care and medical attention when sick or injured so that health problems are averted and treated as early as possible; and

WHEREAS, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) was added to the Social Security Act by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 to provide health insurance to the country's uninsured children under the age of 19; and

WHEREAS, Alabama was the first state in the nation to have a federally approved CHIP plan, which was the result of a partnership between the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Alabama Medicaid Agency and the Alabama Child Caring Foundation; and

WHEREAS, CHIP is administered by the Alabama Department of Public Health and provides low-cost, comprehensive healthcare coverage for more than 74,000 eligible children and teens under the age of 19 who live in Alabama using the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama provider network; and

WHEREAS, CHIP marks a 25-year milestone in October, Children's Health Care Month, and celebrates the important contributions made to the health of the children of Alabama during its silver anniversary thanks to the consistent support provided by Alabama leaders in jointly funding the program with the federal government during the past quarter century;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Kay Ivey, Governor of Alabama, do hereby proclaim October 14, 2022, as

Children's Health Insurance Program Day

in the state of Alabama.



*Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the
Office of the Governor at the State Capitol in the City
of Montgomery on the 3rd day of October 2022.*

Kay Ivey
Kay Ivey, Governor



Current staff members decorated and furnished refreshments for a reception which included a PowerPoint presentation of achievements. Shelby Shubird, ALL Kids Education and Outreach Director DeeAnn White and retiree Viki Brant are pictured.



Gayle Sandlin, CHIP's first director and retiree, and her husband Dennis traveled from out-of-state for the news conference and reception.

Staff members of the Children's Health Insurance Program hosted former CHIP leaders, partners past and present, fellow RSA Tower employees, and others with a joyous celebration on October 14.



CHIP employees Erica Horton and Teresa Baniewicz-Paz served at the reception.



Lutresia Adair and Nora Mays welcomed attendees.



Shown are CHIP employees Tara Freeman, Janelle Sellers and Kandice Abernathy.

ABA CITIZEN OF THE YEAR FOR 2022: STATE HEALTH OFFICER DR. SCOTT HARRIS

State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris was honored as the Alabama Broadcasters Association (ABA) 2022 Citizen of the Year. The award was presented August 12 during the association's annual conference at Ross Bridge Golf Resort and Spa in Hoover.

The ABA selected Dr. Harris for his ongoing public service, including his leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ABA states, "The purpose of this award is to honor and pay tribute to a citizen of Alabama for outstanding contributions to the well-being, prosperity and progress of the state. It recognizes distinguished and honorable public service. It honors those who have enhanced and enriched the lives of Alabamians by leadership and unselfish service to his or her community and the state."

Dr. Harris' public service began long before joining the Alabama Department of Public Health in 2015. In 2004, Dr. Harris helped to establish the Decatur Morgan Community Free Clinic, serving 13 years as medical director, as well as a board member and board chair. The non-profit clinic offers health care and dental care at no charge to low income, medically uninsured residents, and relies heavily on community volunteers.

As a volunteer physician himself, Dr. Harris has served on many international medical missions to Central America, South America, and Africa. In addition to his board certification in internal medicine and infectious disease, he has additional certificates of qualification in tropical medicine from the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, and in travel medicine from the International Society of Travel Medicine.

According to ABA, the award is meant to recognize outstanding contributions to education, business, professional, civic, philanthropic or religious ideals that have benefited Alabama citizens. It is not devoted to one single achievement in a specific year, but is designed to award continuing service and leadership.



Dr. Scott Harris was greeted with a standing ovation as he was named Citizen of the Year by the Alabama Broadcasters Association August 12 in Birmingham. Medical officers and district administrators joined him at the luncheon presentation.



Celebrating at the ABA presentation, left to right, are Southeastern District Administrator Corey Kirkland, Southwestern District Administrator Chad Kent, Medical Officer for Disease Control and Prevention Dr. Burnestine Taylor, Retired Former Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mary McIntyre, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Karen Landers, Dr. Harris, Northern District Administrator Judy Smith, West Central District Administrator Stacey Adams, Northeastern District Administrator Mary Gomillion, and East Central District Administrator Tim Hatch.

SHERRY BRADLEY PRESENTED 2022 IWSH AWARD WHICH RECOGNIZES EXCEPTIONAL VOLUNTEERS

The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH) honored two volunteers for their participation and exceptional contributions to IWSH programs seeking to bring clean water and safe, reliable sanitation to those most in need. The winners were announced during the opening session of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials' (IAPMO) 93rd annual Education and Business Conference in Charlotte, N.C.

The 2022 IWSH Award recipients are Sherry Bradley, director of the Bureau of Environmental Services for the Alabama Department of Public Health and creator of the Black Belt Unincorporated Wastewater Program (BBUWP), and Michael Lavoie, a.k.a. "The Drain Whisperer," a third-generation licensed plumber and plumbing inspector from Los Angeles with more than 20 years of experience in the field, including a volunteering background with IWSH that began with the Community Plumbing Challenge™ (CPC) Navajo Mountain in 2019.

Bradley and Lavoie were key participants in the IWSH CPC program launched in Lowndes County, Alabama, in March 2022. The CPC was a collaboration with the BBUWP and LIXIL to perform plumbing repairs and upgrades for a series of homes and develop a framework for ongoing plumbing industry support to the BBUWP. Bradley provided local leadership that helped IWSH understand the challenges the community faces and how best to target its services, and Lavoie obtained an Alabama Master plumber license to help oversee the project.

IWSH board member Tom Gugino presented the awards. "I am so proud to see IWSH working to improve sanitation and demonstrating how important it is that these systems be installed thoughtfully by plumbing professionals," he said. "Sherry Bradley and Michael Lavoie were two 'rockstar' IWSH partners who were integral to the success of the Community Plumbing Challenge in Alabama earlier this year. Given their outstanding efforts and commitment to improving the lives of others, it is with great pleasure that I announce Sherry and Michael as the recipients of the 2022 IWSH Award."

Speaking during a follow-up IWSH panel presentation, Bradley said she was surprised and speechless to receive the award. She estimated that 80 percent of the homes in the rural Lowndes County area used straight pipes for plumbing that resulted in sewage on the ground, and for 25 years wondered why something hasn't been done about a generational issue that has led to numerous health problems for the community.

"There's a lot of work to be done, but with IWSH a dream has come true," she said, adding, "Things have turned around big time. There's trust and there's cooperation."

Lavoie said it was an honor and a privilege to be part of the team. "What better way to apply my skills to something like this to help

people get clean water and sanitation, which should be two human rights?" he said. "We can try to get that school of thought going on for the world and make a little bit of change here and there, so I just wanted to add my hands and my time to it."

"It is an honor for our IWSH team to have connected and worked with both Sherry and Michael over the last couple of years, and this IWSH Award recognition is thoroughly deserved in both cases," IWSH Managing Director Seán Kearney said. "This is a two-way street; our very best collaborations are always built on shared learning and gaining experience together, as partners, always working toward the same aim: providing improved access to clean water and safe sanitation where people need it most. Thanks to the collaboration of exceptional and inspirational people like Sherry and Michael, IWSH can go on increasing its abilities and effectiveness as a unique public charity operating in the plumbing industry and WASH sector."

Article Provided by IWSH



IWSH is the philanthropic arm of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials. Sherry Bradley was honored for her efforts to bring clean water and safe, reliable sanitation to those most in need.

INTERNATIONAL SOLUTIONS TO ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS DISCUSSED

International solutions to onsite wastewater treatment systems were discussed in Montgomery on October 27. Sherry Bradley, director of the Bureau of Environmental Services, is pictured at the head of the table leading the discussion. The Black Belt Unincorporated Wastewater Program (BBUWP), in partnership with the International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH), Lixil (American Toilets); FugiClean USA; and the International Association of Plumbers and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), met to discuss and address wastewater issues in Lowndes County. From as far as South Africa to Maine, many were in attendance trying to bring the latest and most innovative onsite systems to be used in installing septic tank systems. Not only is BBUWP and its partners looking at the outside of the home but the inside as well - with an understanding that a healthy home helps make a healthy person.



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE EMPLOYEES RETIRE

Coworkers hosted retirement receptions on two consecutive days for Infectious Diseases and Outbreaks employees Rodriko Sankey and Wendy Coleman. Sankey, Disease Intervention Program Manager, retired after 27 years of state service and was honored October 24.



Shown, left to right, are Jennifer Owes, Nurse Administrator, Emerging Infectious Diseases Unit; Sankey; Kelly Stevens, Infectious Diseases and Outbreaks Division Director; and Harrison Wallace, Bureau of Communicable Disease Director.



On October 25, Rodriko Sankey presents a retirement certificate to Disease Intervention Specialist Wendy Coleman for her 14 years of dedicated service.

TELEMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OFFERED TO VETERANS THROUGH 'MISSION POSSIBLE'

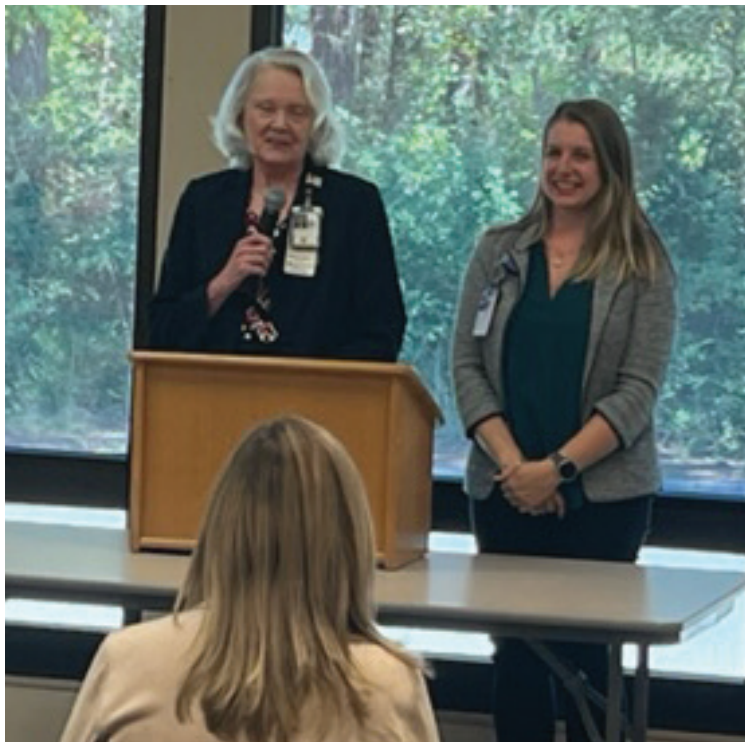
The Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center (TVAMC), along with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), held an open house for the “Mission Possible” program that provides telemental health services to veterans in Pickens County and surrounding areas. The open house was held September 27 at the Pickens County Health Department in Carrollton.

The partnership between TVAMC and ADPH, titled “Mission Possible,” has been in operation since November 2021 offering telemental health to veterans in the community in a more convenient location closer to home. “Mission Possible” signifies the possibilities that telemental health can provide, such as quick access to mental health providers at the Tuscaloosa VA and a wide variety of treatment options. Telehealth is a major benefit to patients who face difficulties in accessing needed health care due to barriers such as lack of transportation or requirements to spend time away from work or family obligations to reach appointments at distant locations. All sessions are HIPAA compliant and encrypted, using a secure audio-video internet connection.

The open house allowed veterans and community members to learn more about the program, meet the healthcare team, and hear about other services provided by the TVAMC and ADPH. Telemental health appointments at the Pickens County Health Department are available Monday mornings.



Rita Wilson, local veteran, and Office of Telehealth Director, April Golson, are shown at the telehealth cart. Ms. Washington works for Disabled American Veterans, Tuscaloosa Chapter #1.



Associate Chief Nurse Rebecca Meyer of the TVAMC, at left, alongside April Golson, speaks with the news media and public at the open house in Carrollton.



Psychologist Dr. David MacVicar, TVAMC, addresses advantages the patient enjoys through telemental health services.

STD/HIV HOME SPECIMEN COLLECTION INITIATIVE

In April 2021, the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), Division of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), implemented a novel self-collected STD/HIV at-home specimen collection initiative facilitated by BINX Health to help address stigma, geographic, and privacy challenges faced by high-risk communities in Alabama. These sexually transmitted disease (STD) collection kits include tests for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV. The free STD/HIV home specimen collection kits are available by mail for all Alabama residents and to selected individuals who are on PrEP therapy.


The Division of STD utilized targeted marketing strategies to reach high-risk communities, universities, and rural settings, and promoted the program with online advertising, news releases, TV segments, and posters in facilities across the state. Individuals placed orders on a unique BINX Health HIPAA-compliant website, where they received an at-home STD/HIV sample collection kit with testing recommendations based on state requirements. Individuals are allowed to choose between a single or triple-site sample collection kit that is specific to their personal sexual practices (anal, vaginal, urine and oral). The kits are delivered to the home or location of choice where samples were self-collected and returned to the laboratory for processing. Diagnostic test results are made available through the consumer's personal BINX Health portal within a few days of sample receipt by the laboratory. If test results are positive, a licensed healthcare provider notified the individual and discussed a treatment plan and referrals. An ADPH Disease Intervention Specialist from the local county health department follows up on all positive individuals to ensure adequate treatment has been received and no additional testing is required.

In the first 12 months of the program, 3,588 orders were placed online. Forty-five percent of the kits were returned to the lab during this period. Of the kits returned, 92.5 percent were received within the first 30 days. Approximately 51 percent of individuals opted for the triple-site (genital, rectal, oral) test, whereas 41 percent wanted the single-site (genital-only) test. For those looking to initiate or maintain a PrEP regimen, the Division of STD offered individuals coupons for triple-site at-home sample collection kits including follow-up testing. Follow-up testing at clinically relevant intervals is recommended to assess continued HIV-negative status, kidney function (creatinine), pregnancy for individuals who may become pregnant, and infection with syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea and hepatitis C. To date, 3 percent of test kits were utilized by PrEP clients.

The Division STD experienced a 3.8 percent chlamydia positivity rate and a 2.5 percent gonorrhea positivity rate from the BINX Health testing. Furthermore, the initiative identified 16 newly diagnosed syphilis and 3 newly diagnosed HIV cases. All were referred for treatment and specialized



care management. Primary reasons why surveyed individuals chose at-home sample collection were privacy, affordability, and not being comfortable talking with their healthcare providers about sexual preferences.

At-home sample collection kits for STDs and laboratory-based testing demonstrated the ability to bridge geographical barriers to rural and hard-to-reach communities in Alabama. Carefully designed STD testing programs, in partnership with ADPH county health department, helped ensure that individuals were being tested for the right infections according to medical guidelines, positive results were followed up by a clinician, and appropriate treatment was prescribed. Through the program, 100 percent of all counties in Alabama were reached during this period. Due to the convenience of at-home sample collection, individuals can potentially shorten illness times, prevent transmission, and improve sexual health.



**KNOW YOUR
STD/HIV STATUS**

**FREE, CONFIDENTIAL,
AND CONVENIENT**

 **GET STARTED AT
ADPH.MYBINXHEALTH.COM** 

MULTIPLE TOPICS COVERED DURING NURSING TRAINING DAY 2022

On August 16, the Field Operations Nursing Division staff presented the Nursing Training Day 2022. Sixty-five nurses from the county, district, and central office participated in the one-day educational training. The training began with a welcome and a word of appreciation by State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris. Health department and non-department presenters provided valuable information and instructions to the group. LaDonna Patton from the Alabama Board of Nursing provided instruction related to Critical Thinking in Nursing and Nursing Leadership. Stephanie Maddox, a representative from Sanofi Pharmaceuticals, provided the latest vaccine data related to HPV and MenQuadfi. Elana Parker Merriweather of Medical Advocacy and Outreach also instructed the nurses in self-care and awareness. While Gavin Graf, EHR Director, provided instruction and a live demonstration of new electronic health record features. The day concluded with Chief Nursing Officer Kaye Melnick and Assistant Chief Nursing Officer, Kitty Norris, thanking the nurses for their dedication to public health and the citizens of Alabama during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as providing the group with information on the future direction of public health nursing. Continuing education units were provided for participants.



LaDonna Patton, MSN, RN, CEN, FRE from the Alabama Board of Nursing presents Critical Thinking and Nursing Leadership instructions to ADPH nurses during the Nursing Training Day 2022.

RETIREEES

The following departmental employees have retired recently:

AUGUST

Linda Ray

Northeastern Public Health District

SEPTEMBER

Ted Painton

Southeastern Public Health District

Catherine Person

Southeastern Public Health District

OCTOBER

Candece Adkins

Northern Public Health District

Janice Bradford

West Central Public Health District

Cynthia Granger

Health Provider Standards

Rhonda Hall

Southwestern Public Health District

NOVEMBER

Joan Carlisle

East Central Public Health District

NEW SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT EMPLOYEES INTRODUCED



Welcomed to the district are, seated, left to right, Kacey Chesteen, R.N., Geneva County Home Health; Savannah Thompson, L.M.S.W., IPC District Social Worker (based in Coffee County); standing, Tonya Reed, Pike County Home Health Aide; Jaime Shipes, R.N., IPC Nurse (based in Houston County); Diamond Jordan, Dale County, Environmentalist. Not pictured is Lakedria Hamilton, Crenshaw County Home Health Aide.

THEME OF 2022 SOCIAL WORK CONFERENCE IS 'THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH SOCIAL WORKERS'



Presentations were well received at the one-day conference. Several social workers had not previously visited the new Annex Training Center and made positive comments about it.

Public health social workers from throughout Alabama attended the 2022 ADPH Social Work Conference September 7 at the Public Health Training Annex in Prattville. State Social Work Director William Kennedy lined up an impressive agenda and faculty for this annual conference with the theme, "The Time is Right for Public Health Social Workers."

State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris welcomed attendees, visited with them, and thanked them for their many contributions to their clients and communities.

The following informative topics were explored in addresses by the speakers at the conference:

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

Jennifer Story, MSW, LICSW, ADPH ELC Grant Social Work Supervisor

Ms. Story talked about child abuse and provided examples of situations which might be seen in the health department that need to be referred to the Department of Human Resources.

Elder Justice Strong in Alabama: Bridging the Gap for Elder Justice Across the State

Robyn James, Director, Elder Justice Center of Alabama

John Craft, JD, Clinical Associate Professor of Law, Faulkner University, Jones School of Law and Director, Elder Law Clinic

The elder justice presentation discussed the increase in numbers of older Alabamians who are being taken advantage of through scams and through family members who have moved in with them since COVID.

Leadership Through Teamwork: Lessons from Lego

Brent M. Hatcher, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, MBA, Director, ADPH Office of Human Resources

Hatcher gave each attendee a Lego piece. His demonstration relayed the concept that each individual is important to the department, just like each Lego piece is important in completing the Lego set.

Is Your Oxygen Mask On?

Renee Carpenter, MSW, LICSW, Director of Social Services, Camille Place

Ms. Carpenter's training dealt with the need for social workers to take care of themselves first, so that each employee is better able to care for clients. This is similar to instructions airline passengers are given to put their oxygen mask on first before helping someone else.



Brent Hatcher emphasized that we are stronger together.



John Craft spoke about protecting elders from abuse and neglect.

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.

Charsie Dudley

Home and Community Services
from *Jemekia Walker-Brown*
Home and Community Services
Montgomery, Ala.

Ronnie McLendon

Luke Mayben
Mark Skelton
John Weiss
Information Technology
from *Tim Hatch*
East Central District

Kelly Stevens

Charlie Crawford
ELC Programmatic and Financial Leads
Jennifer Young
Communicable Disease
from *Jennifer Simmons, M.B.A., M.P.H.*
Atlanta, Ga.

Alli Padgett and Center for Emergency Preparedness Staff

Andre Jackson and Warehouse Staff
Facilities Management
Mail Room Staff
from *Jemekia Walker-Brown*
Home and Community Services
Montgomery, Ala.

PREVENTIVE DENTAL VISITS OFFERED IN NEW PARTNERSHIP IN NORTH ALABAMA

The Alabama Department Public Health (ADPH) has entered into an oral health partnership with Calhoun Community College and Wallace State Community College. The colleges are now providing in-kind preventive dental visits for expectant mothers and children ages 1-17 who are uninsured and/or underinsured. The services provided include radiographs, "cleanings," exams, treatment plans, and appropriate referrals for treatment. Children are also eligible for sealants. There is no cost to the patient.

All the patients have to do is call to make an appointment with the college in closest proximity to them, mention they were referred by the ADPH, and have a dental information card in hand with them at their scheduled appointment.

State Dental Director Dr. Tommy Johnson said, "We are excited about this at ADPH, and we are looking forward to great results from it! If there are any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to us."

For more information, contact Africa Patterson, LMSW, Northern District MCH Coordinator, Madison County Health Department, (256) 533-8716, africa.patterson@adph.state.al.us; or Tommy Johnson, DMD, State Dental Director, ADPH Office of Oral Health, Bureau of Family Health Services, (334) 206-5398, tommy.johnson@adph.state.al.us.



CAREER OUTREACH ENCOURAGES AND INFORMS STUDENTS

Public health careers were promoted at the Health Science Career Fair held at Wallace Community College in Dothan on November 1. Stacey Jernigan, LICSW, PIP, Public Health Social Worker, Supervisor, with Southeastern District Workforce Development, reaches out to local educational institutions. The event was well attended by licensed practical nursing and registered nursing students, some of whom will graduate in December or May. Ms. Jernigan finds that students are often unaware of employment opportunities and the state application process, and she encourages and guides them. Her recruitment activities are funded by the district's workforce development grant.

TIFFANY WILSON GRADUATES FROM FIRST COHORT OF DELPH, DIVERSE EXECUTIVES LEADING IN PUBLIC HEALTH

Tiffany Wilson, HIV Data Analytics Branch Manager with the Office of HIV Prevention and Care, recently graduated from a new leadership development program with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers/Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine. The program is titled “DELPH, Diverse Executives Leading in Public Health.”

Ms. Wilson said, “I was blessed to be a part of the very first cohort.”

The year-long program was primarily virtual with the exception of two in-person meetings. She applied and was selected for DELPH, which required that she self identify as a public health professional from an underrepresented group employed in a mid- to senior-level role within a governmental public health agency with at least 1 year of experience. The definition of underrepresented groups includes people of color, disability status, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals.

“Professionally, I haven't defined what I consider to be a high accolade but whatever that is for me; I will embrace it, so that there is Black female representation at the highest level,” she said. “It is okay to not know what your end goal is. The objective is to keep going until you do.”

The September 2022 issue of DELPH Magazine features each member of the cohort group and describes their backgrounds.

Ms. Wilson is a graduate of Georgia Southern University's Master of Public Health program with a concentration in epidemiology. During her tenure with ADPH, she describes her professional accomplishments which include creating databases, developing investigation/ response procedures, drafting a journal article, directing the HIV re-engagement program, and transforming data into actionable insight.



For others exploring whether to apply, Ms. Wilson said, “I would definitely recommend this program. For me personally, it pushed me to get out of my comfort zone, acknowledge that I am a leader, and keep striving for more. This program not only brought on a robust amount of networking opportunities but also sense of community amongst my cohort.”

For more information, visit <https://www.astho.org/topic/leadership-and-workforce-development/delph/about/>

MOBILE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT COMPLETES HEALTH EQUITY PROJECT

Family Health, the primary care division of the Mobile County Health Department (MCHD), was selected earlier this year to participate in the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) Pro Bono for Health Equity Program. Only four Community Health Centers in the United States were chosen for this honor.

In 2020, J&J shared the aspiration to help eradicate racial and social injustice by eliminating health inequities for people of color with a \$100 million commitment to invest in and promote health equity. Pro Bono for Health Equity, which supports the J&J Our Race to Health Equity commitment, is a virtual program designed to build capacity and enhance the services of U.S.-based Community Health Centers (CHC) supporting under-resourced communities of color.

J&J personnel provided pro bono support to help CHC's tackle projects dedicated to transforming the patient's experience and improving health outcomes. J&J is working in partnership with the Taproot Foundation to bring this program to life.

Family Health and MCHD's Women, Infants & Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program partnered with a team of J&J professionals for a 12-week period. Over the course of the assignment, they worked closely with their J&J teams to develop a deliverable and implementation plan that addresses a submitted challenge.

Claris Perkins, WIC's District Nutrition Director, MCHD, said, “The goal is to improve the health of our youth in Mobile County. The result of this partnership was many learned lessons in communication, strategy, and partnership. Together, we created a Wellness Checklist. This checklist will be provided to families and children to help connect them with age-appropriate health services within the agency and community.”

Even though the project is finished, Mobile County Health Officer Dr. Kevin Michaels said the lessons learned will be used across Family Health and MCHD to improve the community.

By J. Mark Bryant

MONTGOMERY AIRPORT EMERGENCY DISASTER EXERCISE HELD

A mock aircraft emergency disaster drill involving eight agencies was held at the Montgomery Regional Airport October 26. The entire Emergency Preparedness team of the East Central Public Health District participated in the full-scale exercise. Student actors from Auburn University at Montgomery and Trenholm State Community College performed as the injured patients in the simulated scenario. At the exercise conclusion, participants noted that there was better communication among the partner emergency response agencies involved than in previous years. Drills are mandated every 3 years.



Members of the East Central Public Health District Emergency Preparedness Team participating at the exercise included, left to right, Willie Mason, Ursula Crittenden, Stacey Carter (behind), Rebekah Estes, Mary Conway, Stacey McClain, Kayce Brock and Ashley Thomas.

IPC STAFF TRAINED IN THE USE OF PAPRS

Infection Prevention and Control supervisors and teams in all public health districts recently received training in the use of Powered Air Purifying Respirators (abbreviated as PAPRs). These respirators are needed to prevent pathogen transmission in healthcare settings and provide greater protection than other devices.

COVID funding was utilized to provide the PAPRs for each district. Thresa Dix and Judy Dicks of Field Operations conducted the training and gave 5 NIOSH-approved PAPRs to each supervisor.

Jennifer Jennings and Lindsey Laminack of the Northeastern District Infection Prevention and Control team receive the training. Others included Sherry Atkins, Demeta Brown, Jamie Pecks and Katie Phelps.



WISEWOMAN PROGRAM SHARES SUCCESS STORY

The WISEWOMAN (Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation) Program is an extension of the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (ABCCEDP) of the Alabama Department of Public Health. The program focuses on identifying and reducing cardiovascular disease risk factors including high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, elevated cholesterol, physical inactivity, and tobacco use.

Shakari Beechem, a Master Social Worker and Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker, coordinates the WISEWOMAN program at Mobile County Health Department. It consists of more than 400 women who have the opportunity to obtain a free health screening, attend support meetings, lifestyle program, nutrition education, and produce gift certificates. Beechem schedules a fun, educational and interactive support meeting for the participants that includes topics such as cooking, exercising, and gardening.

One participant, Carolyn Hewitt, has made a major adjustment in her life thanks to the WISEWOMAN program. The following story was submitted by Ms. Beechem to share with the community.



May 2021



Today

I am so proud of our amazing WISEWOMAN participants during this past year. We've had women who continued to put in the work, despite the pandemic. However, there is one participant, Ms. Hewitt, who's changed her lifestyle and the results are phenomenal.

Back in March 2021, Ms. Hewitt enrolled in the WISEWOMAN Program. She weighed 252 pounds, had a BMI (Body Mass Index) of 40, blood glucose of 290, and A1C at 8.8 percent. Our WISEWOMAN provider determined Ms. Hewitt was a first-time diabetic and had high cholesterol. The WISEWOMAN social worker assessed the patient and scheduled her an appointment with a primary provider and with our dietitian to help control her diabetes and weight.

Ms. Hewitt stated it was the thought of giving herself a shot each week that frightened her. On that day, she made up her mind she needed to make the necessary changes, fast.

"I was shocked but not angry," Ms. Hewitt said. "Both sides of my family have diabetes, but felt like, not me, too. I left the doctor's office and dumped everything in my refrigerator in the trash. I went to the grocery store and bought all new items."

Ms. Hewitt started changing her diet, walking, and drinking more water. By July 2021, she returned to the clinic for her WISEWOMAN follow-up appointment, and we were amazed with the results. Ms. Hewitt weighed 216 pounds, had a BMI of 34, blood glucose of

continued on page 17

WISEWOMAN, continued from page 15

82, and A1C of 5.4 percent. Her cholesterol and blood glucose numbers were better controlled, and she lost a total of 34 pounds within 4 months. We praised Ms. Hewitt on her progress and encouraged her to keep reaching her weight loss goal.

In January 2022, Ms. Hewitt returned to clinic to see her primary provider for a follow-up. Ms. Hewitt had lost an astounding 94 pounds total. However, her blood pressure was elevated, which was never an issue prior to this day. Our WISEWOMAN social worker gave Ms. Hewitt a blood pressure monitor. After further assessment we realized she was very anxious about her everyday schedule and health. Our social worker scheduled Ms. Hewitt for an appointment with our clinic behavioral counselor to help with this.

"I over-processed everything and was very rigid about things," Ms. Hewitt said. "I form a list in my head each day and everything must be checked off. After speaking with the counselor, I learned breathing exercises when anxious and techniques/challenges to help me realize it's not the end of the world if things don't happen as I would like them."

On March 19, Ms. Hewitt saw her primary provider and she has lost a total of 97 pounds since last year. Her weight is 154.6 pounds, her blood pressure dropped to 134/81 (20 points), her BMI is 25, blood glucose is 74 and A1C is 5 percent. She is currently off all medications, walking 40,000 steps a day, eating much healthier, journaling, and meal prepping.

"It was great to have support of the WISEWOMAN program and a dietitian that was readily available to assist me via email and phone," Ms. Hewitt said. "I had to remove things out of my life and start treating myself with care."

Ms. Hewitt also mentioned she purchased a charm for her Pandora bracelet after every doctor visit to celebrate herself instead of using food for celebratory moments. She realized it all starts with a changed mind.

"My mind had to be aligned with my body," Ms. Hewitt said. "I have a friend who got the gastric sleeve surgery a month before finding out about my health. Today, I've lost more weight than her due to changing my mindset. Another change was taking time out for myself each morning to journal, walk, and meal prep for the day. This all began after enrolling in the program and finding out about my health."

Ms. Hewitt said she feels so much better and thanks WISEWOMAN for supporting her along the way.

"I can't thank you all enough," Ms. Hewitt said. "WISEWOMAN gave me access to a team of people and information I needed to succeed."

Her diabetes and cholesterol are controlled, and she has lost 97 pounds. Her goal is to lose 3 more pounds.

"Without WISEWOMAN, I would be in the same position and in a negative space," she said.

Ms. Hewitt is a prime example that not only does this program work and is saving lives, but if you put your mind to something you can achieve anything. We are so proud of Ms. Hewitt.

For more information about WISEWOMAN, please call Ms. Beechem at (251) 690-8983.

By J. Mark Bryant

JEANNIE DANIEL AWARDED R.N.

Coworkers extended congratulations to Jeannie Daniel, R.N., of the DeKalb County Health Department. After working as a licensed practical nurse 1 year in LifeCare and 9 years in home health, she graduated August 4 from Wallace State Community College in Hanceville and now is a registered nurse.



TOVER'S ART RECOGNIZED DURING WHO EXHIBITION

Earlier this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) envisioned the future of health and well-being in the Western Pacific in 2050 with the inaugural WHO Futures Art Exhibition. Among those who submitted entries is Ty Tover, a peer counselor with MCHD and a contemporary expressionist painter.

Of his five pieces of art which were all accepted by the juried panel, the painting titled "Alone" has been selected by a panel of art experts from the Western Pacific and staff with the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific to receive special honors. "Alone" was selected as one of the most inspiring and thought-provoking pieces in the Technology category (ways in which the evolution of technology could affect health and well-being in 2050).

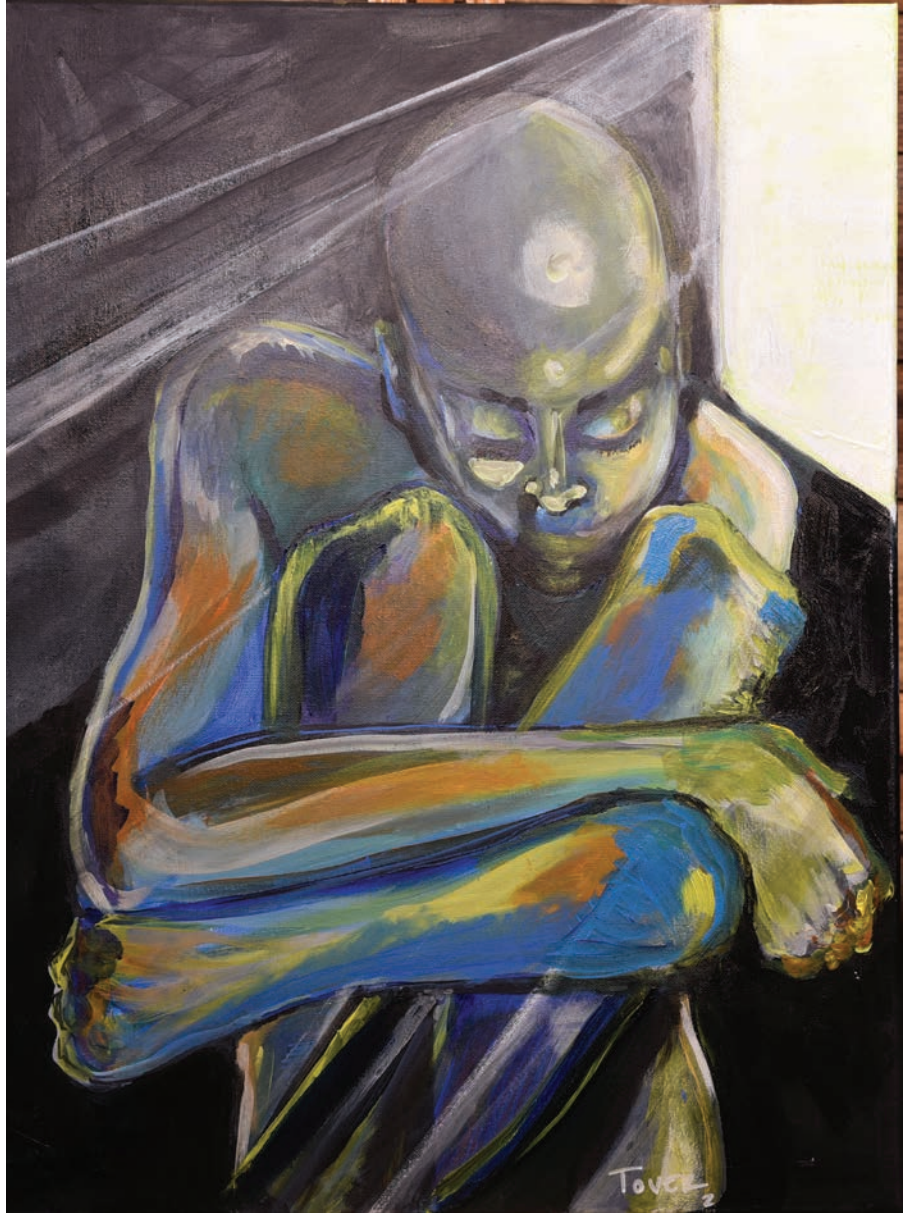
"I am so excited," he said. "This is a dream come true. I have been drawing and painting since I was 3 years old. 'I always wanted to be a recognized artist. It was taught to us you had to be dead to be famous. I'm glad I got recognized before that on a worldwide scale.'"

Tover's works have been pinned at the top of the 2D gallery for the past several weeks. Because "Alone" was selected as a distinguished winner, it is now exhibited in a dedicated 3D virtual gallery. This can be found at the following link: <https://whofuturesartexhibition.artcall.org/pages/3d-gallery>.

Mentions were given to up to three artworks in each category based on the following criteria: Visual impact; Strength of the vision conveyed through the work; Strength of the vision conveyed through the statement; Original concept and theme (How well does the artwork relate to the theme?).

Along with the Technology category (the ways in which the evolution of technology could affect health and well-being in 2050), Tover also submitted art in the People and Society category (ways in which people, populations and society may impact health and well-being in 2050), the Economy category (ways in which the economy in the Region may affect health and well-being in 2050), the Environment category (ways in which the environment may impact health and well-being in 2050) and the Open category (aims to explore the future of health and well-being beyond the categories above).

The exhibition was open to artists who were interested in the Western Pacific Region and wanted to share their ideas about the future of health in the Region through visual art.



A native of Mobile, Tover's colorful paintings pay homage to his life experiences and his emotions. His distinctive personal style and use of color permeates throughout his works. Most of his works display his fondness for use of acrylic paints over black canvas.

Tover has led a very interesting life saturated in the arts: from lead dancer, to choreographer, to local painter. Tover left Mobile early on in his life to seek culture in other communities. He spent more than a decade in Los Angeles where he served on numerous artistic boards, including the Disney Anaheim Museum.

His artwork has been shown in local exhibitions, including the most recent one by the Mobile Arts Council titled "Black Health and Wellness." Tover's work is currently featured on the Mobile Arts Council's Virtual Art Gallery at <https://mobilearts.org/virtualgallery>.

By J. Mark Bryant

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IDENTIFICATION CARDS ISSUED AT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Imagine you hear loud sirens, see bright lights, and are stopped by a law enforcement officer while driving alone. Imagine that you are on the autism spectrum and are increasingly overwhelmed with sensory overload well before the officer or a first responder reaches the vehicle. Fortunately, tense situations such as this one can be de-escalated in many situations if the individual has an Autism Spectrum Disorder Identification Card and keeps it handy.

Alabama created and implemented the first state-recognized Autism Identification Card in the United States, and county health departments issue them.

Alabamians who have a diagnosis that falls within the autism disorder spectrum may apply for an identification card that can assist in their interactions with first responders and law enforcement officers during potentially stressful situations.

Wording on the card explains that the individual falls within the autism spectrum and may have difficulty communicating or understanding directions. The card further states that the person may become agitated if touched because of his or her medical condition.

Before a card is issued, a health care provider (such as a psychologist, pediatrician or family practice doctor) must verify that the person is on the autism spectrum. The cards also contain the contact information for someone who can confirm the cardholder's diagnosis, as well as give information that may help calm the individual. The Autism Spectrum Disorder Card Registration Form, <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/disability/assets/autismspecdiscardregform.pdf>, may be downloaded, printed and brought to any county health department.

Adult drivers are to come in person and bring their government issued driver's license when applying.

For children and adult family members, parents/caretakers are to take their child or adult family member and a government issued form of identification to apply. The adult, child or adult family member diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder must be present to receive the billfold-sized card. Health department employees issue the card upon receipt of a completed application and payment of \$10.

The identification cards were developed as a result of Act 2014-344, passed during the 2014 session of the Alabama Legislature.

I Have Autism Spectrum Disorder:

I have been medically diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. My medical condition impairs my ability to communicate with others. As a result I may have difficulty understanding your directions, and I may not be able to respond to your questions. I may also become physically agitated if you touch me or move too close to me.

Please do not interpret my behavior as refusal to cooperate. I am not intentionally defying your instructions.

(Please see reverse side for additional information)



If I exhibit any of these behaviors, I request that you contact the person noted below on my behalf; s/he will confirm my diagnosis and provide information you may need about my identity.

My Printed Name

EST.

1875

Card Number

Contact Printed Name

Contact Printed Number

This certification has been issued by the Alabama Department of Public Health in accordance with

Code of Ala. 1975, § 32-6-6.2

For more information, visit alabamapublichealth.gov

CONTEST DONATIONS HELP SCC HELP OTHERS



The Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support won the RSA Tower Central Office Halloween Decorating Contest by garnering the most votes (by money collected) for its spooky and creative decorations, "Bodies, Bodies Everywhere and Yet Still Searching for the Missing!" Worthy runners up were the Bureau of Financial Services' spooky decorations titled "You'll Reap the Cagney Bones!!!" and the Bureau of

Family Health Services' "You'll Find it Humerus!!!!" Proceeds from contest votes were donated to the State Combined Campaign, which supports hundreds of charities statewide. Shown in the winning suite and wearing their Halloween best, left to right, are Ann Colley, Jennifer Allen, Stuart Hoyle, Carlene Robinson, DeeAmbra Peterson, April Mullins, Blu Gilliland and Joanne Gilliland.

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 29 • 11 A.M.- 12 NOON

The Impact of Health Literacy on Underprivileged Communities

JANUARY 17 • 1-2 P.M.

Newborn Hearing Care Coordination Training

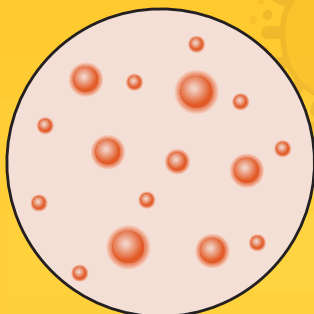
JANUARY 24 • 10 A.M.

"Share Your Smile with Alabama" Photo Contest

The Oral Health Office will announce the winners of the 2023 "Share Your Smile with Alabama" photo contest.

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

M NKEYPOX



Rash or sores



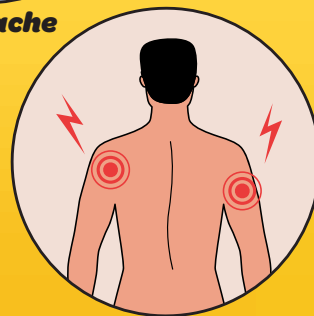
Fever



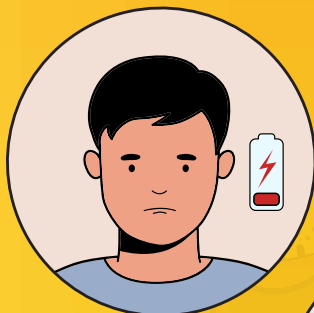
Headache



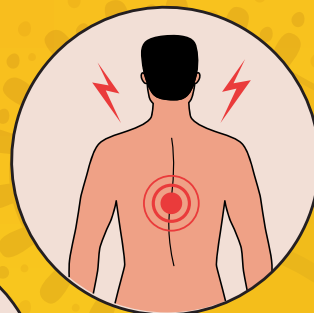
Cough



Muscle Aches



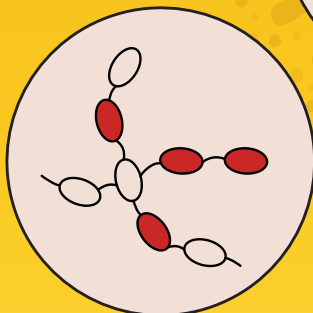
Exhaustion



Back Aches



Chills



Swollen Lymph Nodes

**Are you at
risk for the
monkeypox
disease?**

**Know the signs
and symptoms.**

For more information, visit

cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox • alabamapublichealth.gov/monkeypox

ALABAMA PUBLIC HEALTH