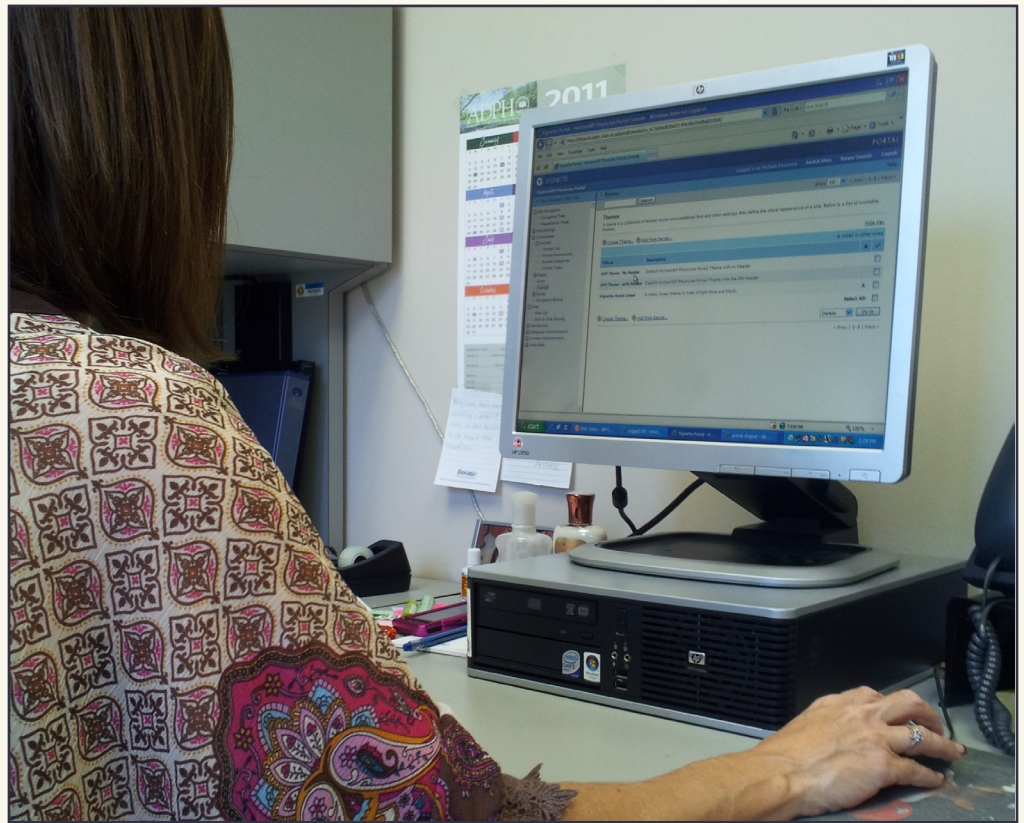


## Home and Community Services Uses New Technology to Better Serve Physicians and Patients

A physician in Houston County is enjoying his first cup of coffee at home at 5:30 a.m. when he opens an email reminder prompting him that he has unsigned physician orders. He then uses his unique password to log in to a secure website, reviews the homebound patient's vital signs and blood sugar ranges, and electronically signs orders for her care before leaving his house for the day. The internist has been participating in a pilot study which will be implemented by the Bureau of Home and Community Services statewide this month.

In an ongoing process to better serve patients and medical providers, the department recently added Horizon Home Care Physician Portal/Web Chart to its database. This is a web-based secure online service which provides physicians access to their patients' home health records 24 hours a day. This means physicians are able to review patient medications and treatment plans, and sign documentation online at no additional cost to them.

Previously, the process of issuing orders might have taken several days or even weeks because it involved printing a form, obtaining a physician's signature, and mailing the form to the home health subunit. The implementation of this new technology will reduce time in completing paperwork so that physicians can allocate more of their time to their patients. It will also



**The web-based secure online service improves patient care.**

increase efficiency in patient care and reduce treatment errors.

Overseeing this project has been Nurse Consultant Michele Paramore of the Home Care Services Division, who has been demonstrating the Horizon Homecare Physician Portal/Web Chart to medical providers. She has received a very positive response, and said, "The physicians recognize that this will provide an opportunity to increase the quality of patient care as well as reduce administrative time for themselves and their staff. It also

should save time for our home health support staff."

Physicians can review their patient's medications, vital signs, diagnosis, reasons for admission, allergies, surgical history and emergency contacts through the secure site anywhere and anytime. They can also elect to have their office staff view the current list of medications, but only the physician can sign orders.

The pilot program was conducted with specific physicians across eight counties.

## IT offers MS Office Class Instruction

The Bureau of Information Technology (IT) offers training for Microsoft Office 2007 applications at no cost to bureaus or offices. Classes for Word, Excel and PowerPoint are offered on a rotating basis and cover beginner to advanced skill levels. Beginner and intermediate classes are offered more frequently than advanced classes due to demand. Access classes are also available and may be scheduled by request. Classes typically last two days and are held in the RSA Tower from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In addition to regularly scheduled classes, IT can provide custom Office 2007 classes designed to meet specific needs. While arranging these classes, IT works with a representative from the requesting office to determine which topics and skill levels to cover. This allows the bureau to offer classes that may require less time or cover material spanning different skill levels.

With sufficient notice, IT can provide training statewide. A portable classroom can accommodate up to 10 students per class. Classes of up to 20 students are possible if the training space is adequately sized and if additional equipment is provided. If travel is required for the

instructor, requesting offices are responsible for the travel-related expenses.

For questions or more information regarding Microsoft Office 2007 training, please email [IT.Training@adph.state.al.us](mailto:IT.Training@adph.state.al.us).



**Tracey Cannon gives pointers as she instructs a class in Excel at the RSA Tower.**

## Choose Healthful Vending Machine Fare

Stop to consider the choices you are making before you insert your dollar bill or drop your change into a vending machine to grab a snack. Is it a healthful selection, or is it a food or drink that is low in nutrition and high in calories?

"The vision of the Alabama Department of Public Health is for Alabamians of all ages to embrace a culture of healthy choices as their normal way of life," Miriam Gaines, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity director, said. In furtherance of that goal, the Health Department partnered

with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services to develop a vending machine policy for pilot building locations in state agencies. The policy strives to make positive environmental changes by replacing unhealthful food and beverage options with more nutritious selections to support healthy behavior.

ADPH has also partnered with Canteen Vending to implement the healthy vending options in private entities. Baptist Health Systems, Jackson Hospital and East Alabama Medical Center are among the private sector

businesses offering healthier vending machine options to their employees and customers using the "Good Choice" nutrition criteria.

The overall goal of this policy is to offer healthy choices while still allowing for free choice. Nutrition criteria were developed and used to identify healthful snacks. The policy specifies that 30 to 100 percent of food in vending machines meet the following criteria for each individual serving:

- 10 percent or less of the daily value of fat

**continued page 3**

### Alabama Department of Public Health

#### Mission

To serve the people of Alabama by assuring conditions in which they can be healthy.

#### Value Statement

The purpose of the Alabama Department of Public Health is to provide caring, high quality and professional services for the improvement and protection of the public's health through disease prevention and the assurance of public health services to resident and transient populations of the state regardless of social circumstances or the ability to pay.

The Department of Public Health works closely with the community to preserve and protect the public's health and to provide caring quality services.

### Alabama's Health

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**Donald E. Williamson, M.D.**..... State Health Officer

**Jim McVay, Dr. P. A.**..... Director, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease

**Arrol Sheehan, M.A.**..... Editor

**Takenya S. Taylor, J.D.**..... Contributing Editor

**Noelle Ahmann** ..... Graphic Designer



## Dr. Mark Wilson Appointed to Jefferson County Post

Upon the retirement of Dr. Michael E. Fleenor, Dr. Mark E. Wilson was appointed the health officer for Jefferson County, CEO of the Jefferson County Department of Health and area health officer for Public Health Area 4 effective Oct. 1. Dr. Wilson has supported the many activities of the Health Action Partnership, a coalition of local agencies committed to improving health and quality of life in Jefferson County. Dr. Wilson's service to his community extends over his 20-year career as a physician and Chief of Staff at Cooper Green Mercy Hospital, a clinical teacher for UAB Medicine students and residents, and a member of both the Jefferson County Medical Society Board and the Jefferson County Board of Health. He has also served on other local boards and has been involved with national organizations that focus on the poor and underserved, and on ensuring availability of quality health care for everyone. Dr. Wilson received his Bachelor of Civil Engineering degree from Georgia Institute of Technology and his medical degree from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Dr. Wilson and his wife, Marian, have four children.



## Molly Killman Awarded Jack Davis Professional Achievement Award

The University of Alabama College of Human Environmental Sciences presented the Jack Davis Professional Achievement Award to Molly Killman, assistant director of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, during homecoming activities on campus Oct. 7 and 8.

The Jack Davis Professional Achievement Awards are presented annually to outstanding UA College of Human Environmental Sciences alumni for their professional accomplishments. Ms. Killman is president-elect of the Alabama Dietetic Association and is secretary of the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors. She earned a bachelor's degree in nutrition and food science from Auburn University and a master's degree in nutrition from the University of Alabama.

Dr. Jack Davis, the first male graduate of the college, was a pioneer in emphasizing nutrition and dentistry.



**Ms. Killman is shown here with her husband Scott.**

### **Vending, continued from page 2**

- 10 percent or less of the daily value of carbohydrates
- 5 percent or more of the daily value of at least one: fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium or iron
- 360 milligrams or less of sodium.

Some employees who work in the buildings where the "Good Choice" practice has been implemented have been surprised to learn that appealing snacks are also nutritious. Instead of buying an item of minimal nutritional

value, they now opt for food and beverages that promote good health.

In addition to workplaces, the State Board of Education has the same nutritional standards for school vending machines. This works to reinforce the same nutrition message. By using the same nutrition standards, families learn the same selection criteria--at work and at school. "What we are hoping is these skills will be used when selecting snacks at other locations, such as the grocery store or gas station," states Registered Dietitian Teresa Fair.

In recommending more healthful snacks in schools, policy makers noted, "Eating patterns developed as a child can influence the long-term nutritional status and have a significant impact on the risks--or preventing risks--of chronic diseases of childhood."

Ms. Gaines said, "While the improvements these policy changes represent may be gradual, they mean Alabamians are willing to make changes that will reduce the worsening obesity epidemic. Try to make good choices for your health every day."

# EMS Brings Technology and Medications to Save Lives

**T**ime is critical in saving lives after a patient suffers a heart attack, and many patients in Baldwin and Mobile counties now benefit from a coordinated system of life-saving treatment. It begins when 9-1-1 is called and paramedics perform early 12-lead electrocardiograms (ECGs) while en route to the hospital.

Capt. Jack Busby of the Mobile Fire Department is enthusiastic about the advanced system that can mean the difference between life and death, depending on the patient's condition. He said, "Our firemedics bring the technology and medications of the emergency room to the patient's side."

ECGs are usually done in hospital emergency rooms to aid in the diagnosis of a heart attack and monitor heart rhythm. An early ECG saves precious minutes by allowing the patient to go straight from the ambulance to the cardiac catheterization laboratory where blocked arteries can be opened.

Medical authorities associate delays in receiving angioplasty with higher mortality in heart attack patients, and time to treatment should be as short as possible. As much as 40 minutes can be saved by having the ECG and medications prior to hospital arrival. It can take up to 10 minutes to perform the ECG in the emergency department plus 30 minutes call-back time for the catheterization lab team to arrive if they are not already in the hospital.

The American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology recommend a 90-minute door-to-balloon coronary angioplasty time to restore blood flow to the heart. Time saved prior to hospital admission can help preserve the heart muscle.

"Ninety minutes is the national standard time, but our system in Baldwin County has greatly improved on that time," Jamie Hinton of Medstar Emergency Medical Service said. "We have it down to a science."

The following is an example of how the system works. In a recent situation in southern Baldwin County, a patient with chest pains phoned EMS at 1:30 a.m. and the 9-1-1 operator received pertinent information and instructed the patient to take an aspirin. After the EMTs arrived and set out for the hospital, they placed a 12-lead ECG monitor on his chest and transmitted the results to an on-call cardiologist. The inexpensive system used a Bluetooth connection to a cell phone to send the results to a server. The server sent it out as a fax to the hospital. The medics placed the patient on oxygen, established two intravenous lines, and administered the appropriate medications.



***Shown with the Fire Mark Award of the Mobile Fire Department Insurance Company are, left to right, Deputy Chief Don Meyers, Mobile Fire Rescue Department; Assistant Chief Billy Pappas, Mobile Fire Rescue; Ann Eubanks, Cardiovascular Service Line Coordinator, Springhill Medical Center; and Paul Tomlinson, Director, Emergency Room and Critical Care Services, Springhill Medical Center.***

Meanwhile at the hospital, the cardiologist, several nurses and technicians all mobilized to respond quickly. Just 39 minutes later the patient underwent a blockage-clearing procedure at the catheterization laboratory. Now recovered, the patient credited the team with saving his life by their early diagnosis and preparation.

While the technology to expedite 12-lead ECGs in ambulances has existed for a number of years, Springhill Medical Center in Mobile and the three facilities in Baldwin County (Thomas Hospital, South Baldwin Regional Medical Center and North Baldwin Infirmary) are among the hospitals in Alabama that use this effective system.

The approved cardiac catheterization lab in Baldwin County is located at Thomas Hospital in Fairhope, so patients from more distant areas of the county are first taken to the hospital closest to them. While remaining on their stretcher, they are treated with thrombolytic drugs to dissolve blood clots and then are sent directly to Thomas Hospital's cath lab.

Staff members from the hospitals meet monthly to help improve the system. When an issue that needs to be corrected arises, the cardiologists and others members of the coordinated team track it down and solve it.

***continued page 6***



# Getting Healthy With a Good Book!

## Libraries Increase Access to Health Information

Residents of all ages in Dallas, Perry and Sumter counties now have greater access to library books that support healthy lifestyle behaviors, thanks to Alabama's Strategic Alliance for Health Program.

Posters placed in locations throughout the community encourage the public to "jump into a new book because the journey to health and wellness can start with a good book" from their local library. Additionally, fliers were distributed to faith-based institutions, schools and local venues. Newspapers announced the addition of the books to local libraries.

Alabama's Strategic Alliance for Health program is a five-year initiative to create healthier communities in Alabama's Black Belt Region and West Alabama through sustainable, evidence- and practice-based community health program and chronic disease prevention initiatives.

The Strategic Alliance for Health team, with the assistance of the community consortiums developed in each county, assessed and documented policies, systems and environmental supports currently in place in their counties. As they identified interventions to implement throughout the country, stakeholders felt it was important to offer ongoing education to support healthy lifestyle behaviors.

Partnerships with local libraries were identified as having the potential to impact many people. Each of the county community coordinators met with the librarians in their county and determined that this was a great opportunity to help provide new and updated information.

Librarians helped create a wish list of books or book topics related to health such as the Physician's Desk Reference,

cookbooks featuring healthy recipes, and health topics revealed by library members as relevant to their lives. A senior health educator researched books and put together a list meeting the needs of the libraries and fitting into the scope of the Strategic Alliance for Health objectives.

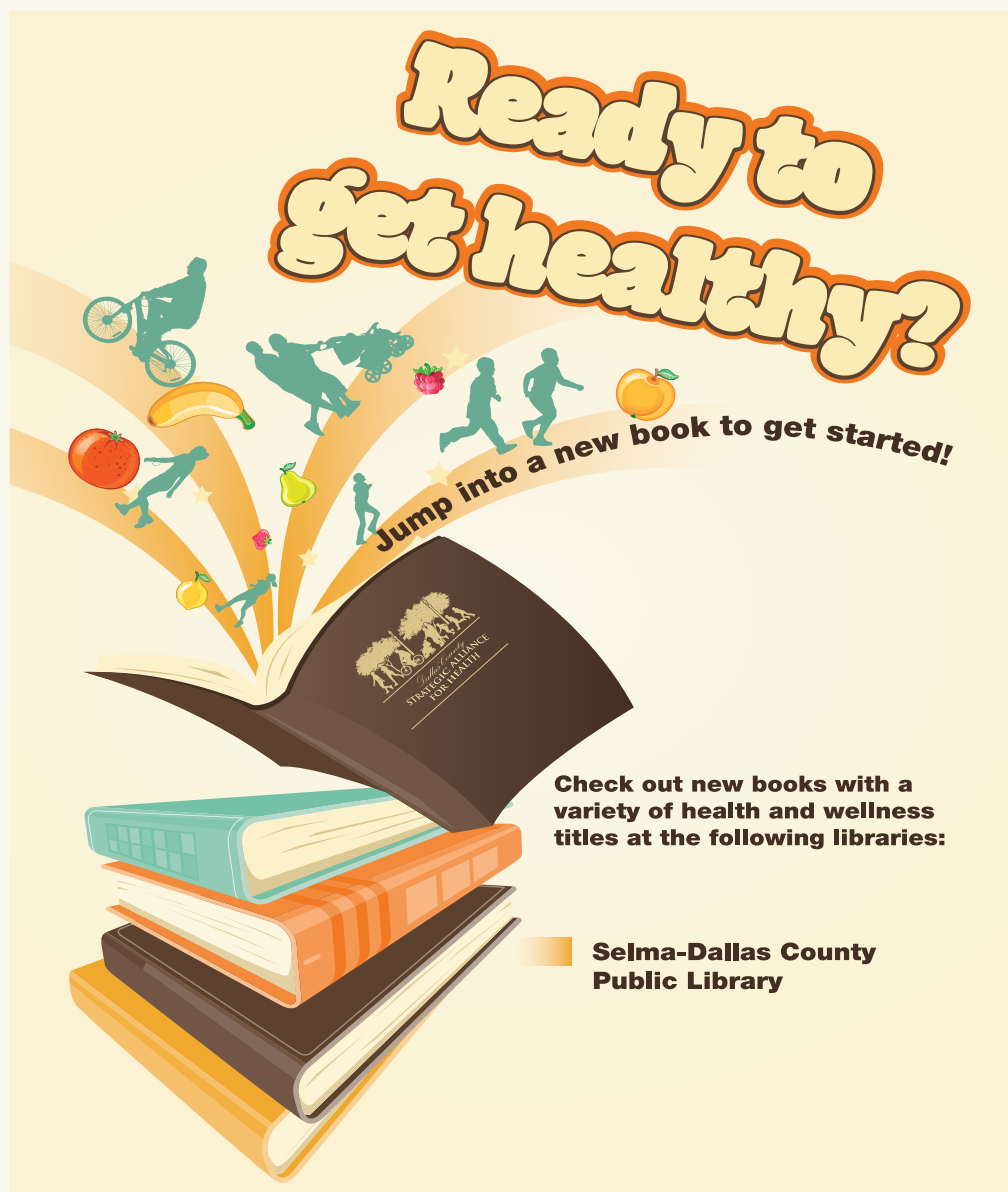
About 40 new books are now in circulation. The books cover these chronic disease areas:

- Diabetes and cardiovascular disease
- Healthy recipes
- Strength and fitness training
- Eating well
- Healthy pregnancies

- Flexibility and stretching
- Anatomy and the human body
- Smoking cessation

Selma-Dallas County Public Library Director Becky Nichols stated, "It is vital to offer this information to our residents in order to address lifestyle habits that are contributing to our chronic diseases."

Leslie Knox, senior health educator with the Alabama Strategic Alliance for Health, said, "New books are for everyone from toddlers, adolescents, teenagers, young adults, adults and senior adults."



Check out new books with a variety of health and wellness titles at the following libraries:

**Selma-Dallas County Public Library**

## EMS, continued from page 4

Similar to the Baldwin County system, Springhill Medical Center provides continual feedback to the Mobile Fire Rescue Department to address any delays or other areas for improvement as well as celebrate successes. In a recent incident, Mobile Fire Rescue helped to cut the time from entering the hospital door to angioplasty time to a record of just 19 minutes. The Mobile Fire Department's quality assurance team has a direct line of communication to Springhill's cath lab. The interaction between both

entities benefits all involved, but most importantly the patients and the care they receive.

"This enhances the quality of life for heart attack patients," Ann Eubanks, Springhill's Cardiovascular Service Line coordinator said. "We coordinate and communicate back to Mobile Fire Rescue how they do, because the times are an incentive to improve overall quality. We want to improve the outcome for the patient, and we couldn't do it without the EMS side."

Anyone with symptoms of a heart attack is advised to call 9-1-1 immediately and rely on the trained paramedics who will provide pre-hospital treatment and transport the victim to a hospital. By arriving by ambulance, patients can also bypass the emergency room. Heart attack patients should not drive themselves to the hospital and should only be driven there by someone else if absolutely necessary.

## Environmental Health Q and A

*Homeowner expresses concern about attic insulation*

**QUESTION:** We had insulation blown into our attic last year. I have tried contacting the contractor, but my calls have not been returned. We think there is something that is in the insulation that is causing respiratory stress with us and our pets. Where should we go to get some help?

**ANSWER:** You need to contact your local building code inspector to have an attic

inspection. It seems your contractor may not have followed the building code and sprayed the insulation covering the attic ventilation openings. If you close the openings, the moisture in the attic builds up and mold can grow in the attic space and molds can cause your respiratory problems.

For your information, blown-in insulation materials usually do not cause respiratory problems since they do not migrate or float into your living space. If the mold is in the attic or you

can smell musty smells, you need to remove all contaminated materials and clean up any surface growth. Depending on the seriousness of mold contamination, you may need to contact a mold remediation company. Your homeowners' insurance may cover the remediation cost, depending on your policy.

To file a complaint, you can also contact the Better Business Bureau, the Alabama Contractor Licensing Board or the state Attorney General's Office.

## Commendations

**I**f 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](mailto: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.

**Vernon Adkins**  
**Danny Williams**  
Video Communications Division  
from Sherry Bradley  
Montgomery, Ala.

**Mary Conway, R.N.**  
**Teresa Young**  
PHA 8 Emergency Preparedness  
from Eric Jones  
Wetumpka, Ala.

**Florine Croxton**  
**Ted Johnson**  
**Reginald Strickland**  
Center for Health Statistics  
from Patsy B. Williams  
Montgomery, Ala.

**Wayne DuBose**  
**Carolyn Thomas**  
**Melanie Webster**  
Health Provider Standards  
from Sherry Ginn  
Phenix City, Ala.

**Veronica Moore-Whitfield**  
Center for Health Statistics  
from Karen Armsby  
Dacula, Ga.

**Amy Richards**  
Dale County Health Department  
from Samuel Moore  
Newton, Ala.

**Delia Reynolds**  
Public Health Area 10  
from Linda G. Harvey, L.B.S.W., M.S.  
Dothan, Ala.

**Reginald Strickland**  
Center for Health Statistics  
from Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey  
Montgomery, Ala.

**Angelica Webb**  
Bureau of Clinical Laboratories  
from Tim Hatch  
Montgomery, Ala.



# Office of Minority Health Launches the National Partnership for Action Outreach Strategy

Over the past few months, the State Office of Minority Health has hosted a series of forums to launch the National Partnership for Action Plan Strategy to reduce and eliminate health disparities in minority communities in Alabama.

The mission of the partnership is to increase the effectiveness of programs that target the elimination of health disparities through the coordination of partners, leaders and stakeholders who are committed to action. The partnership has served as a catalyst for collective leadership action around five main objectives: awareness, leadership, health system and life experience, cultural and linguistic competency, and research and evaluation.

The Office of Minority Health has utilized the partnership goals to raise awareness around Alabama health disparities and access-to-care issues in minority and underserved communities. Information was also shared on social determinants to health care including communication and language barriers with limited English speaking populations, sexual and gender identity issues, post-traumatic stress syndrome after an emergency, and the use of social media as a strategy for improving health communications.

The forums have served as a venue to disseminate information on the partnership goals and strategies to health care providers, community representatives, social service organizations and state agencies.

For more information on the National Partnership for Action Plan and Office of Minority Health initiatives to address health disparities in Alabama, please call (334)206-5396 or email omh@adph.state.al.us.



**Graduate students in public health participated in the second forum at Tuskegee University.**



**Elana Parker Merriweather is shown with Capt. Arlene Lester, D.D.S., M.P.H., Regional Minority Health Consultant, United States Public Health Service. Capt. Lester spoke on the topic: "US Department of Health and Human Services: Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities" at a satellite conference.**



**Anton Gunn, M.S.W., Regional Director, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region IV, spoke at the third forum on the Affordable Care Act: Implementation 2010-2014. He is shown at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute with Julia Sosa, M.S., R.D., and Elana Parker Merriweather, M.Ed., M.L.A.P., of the Office of Women's Health and Office of Minority Health.**



# Retirees

## September

**Rhonda Cofield**  
Public Health Area VI

**Frances Holder**  
Public Health Area I

**Michael Jarrett**  
Health Care Facilities

**Myra Johnston**  
DeKalb County Health Department

**Deborah Thomasson**  
Public Health Area XI

**Frances Walters**  
Coffee County Health Department  
**Monika Wright**  
Public Health Area II

## October

**Dolly Caldwell**  
Macon County Health Department  
**Barbara Lindsey**  
Cullman County Health Department  
**Peggy McDaniel**  
Greene County Health Department



**Dr. Grace Thomas presents a retirement certificate to Brenda G. Davis, nurse coordinator with the Bureau of Family Health Services, who retired Oct. 1 after more than 33 years of service.**



**Office Manager Edith Billingslea of the Chambers County Health Department was honored with a retirement reception on Sept. 30. Ms. Billingslea retired after 37 years of service. Area 6 Assistant Administrator Mark Johnson presents her retirement certificate.**



**John W. Hicks, Jr., retired Oct. 1 from the Bureau of Environmental Services after more than 39 years of service. Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, presents his certificate.**



**Rosanna Smith retired Nov. 1 after nearly 35 years of service. Co-workers from the Cancer Prevention Program of the Bureau of Family Health Services honored her with a retirement reception on Oct. 17.**



# Creativity Abounds at Pumpkin Carving and Costume Contests

Public health employees demonstrated their originality and style in the annual pumpkin decorating and costume contests at the RSA Tower in Montgomery. In the competition sponsored by the Office of Human Resources, entrants intricately carved, dressed, decorated and labeled their pumpkins. By popular vote as tallied by total contributions, the Most Popular pumpkin was "Here's the Beef," entered by Carol Heier, Bill Kennedy and Jeanetta Sheppard. In choosing their favorite pumpkin entry, contest voters donated more than \$200 to benefit the State Combined Campaign. A panel of judges also selected "Here's the Beef" as Best Decorated, and "Montgomery Biscuit" by Michelle Dickey as Best Carved.

At the RSA Park on Halloween, the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division provided precontest games. Then the costume contest began, and a panel of judges selected the following winners: Crystal Steen, "The Gnome;" Betsy Cagle, Michelle Dickey and Barry Riddle, "The Bachelor;" and Ann Dagostin, Wendy Dale, Mandy Darlington, Chris

Haag, Debbie Moulton, Beth Nichols, Kitty Norris, Twila Pigg, Laurie Stout and Sharon Whalen, "Snow White and the Family Health Seven Dwarfs."





# Stories of Inspiration Shared from Jackson County Health Department

**B**y a strange coincidence, two Jackson County Health Department clinic employees were diagnosed with breast cancer on Sept. 15, 2010. Five months later, a third co-worker was found to have the disease. All three women underwent treatment while the disease was still in its early stages and are back on the job. As they have recovered, they are living examples of the importance of breast-self examination and mammography screening.

Through their struggles and triumphs in recent months, the women credit their co-workers for their continued support. None of the three had thought they were at increased risk for breast cancer because of family history, so they have become wonderful examples for health department patients who might consider procrastinating about screening.

Last September Ashly Williams found a lump in her breast, and within a few days saw her physician who ordered mammograms and ultrasounds. Her radiologist showed her the star-shaped lump in her breast and performed a biopsy which indicated a malignancy. After being presented several options, Ms. Williams opted to have a double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery.

"They were really great," the nurse said of the Cancer Center in Huntsville. "They said it was 100 percent my decision, and I thought this choice would minimize the chance of cancer returning."

As the 31-year-old mother of three, Ms. Williams had to explain to her children what was going to happen, and she said her 6-, 7- and 11-year-olds did very well from the beginning and have been very supportive of her throughout. While her surgery lasted seven and one-half hours, she was pleased that the procedure was not as painful as she had expected.

The second survivor, Alice Mitchell, age 50, had been planning a trip to Disney World with her family when she had a routine screening mammogram as she had done for many years. The mammogram showed some small spots which were biopsied for calcifications. The calcifications were so deep back on her chest wall that they couldn't be felt by breast self examination. Her diagnosis of cancer was received on the same day as Ms. Williams'.

"Cancer was already into my lymph nodes, so I had a lumpectomy and 18 weeks of chemotherapy," Ms. Mitchell said. As she recovers, she will continue taking herceptin for one year. When she had a mammogram last week, she



**Three Jackson County Health Department clinic staffers are recovering from recent breast cancer treatment. They are, left to right, Ashly Williams, Shay McGill and Alice Mitchell.**

was pleased that all appeared fine, and she and her family set off on their long-awaited holiday trip to Disney World.

The third survivor, Shay (Gwendolyn) McGill, kept her faith first after she discovered a small lump in her breast. Her cancer diagnosis, which occurred when she was 47, came five months after Ms. Williams' and Ms. Mitchell's. After surgery she underwent chemotherapy and now takes a hormone reducer daily. She advises other women whose breasts may be dense to be persistent if they feel anything they suspect may be a lump. Once it was removed, the lump in her breast was twice its expected size.

During their chemotherapy and resulting hair loss, the three employees wore scrub hats, caps or scarves instead of wigs.

One patient inquired at Ms. McGill's desk if the three wore the head gear and later their short hair for breast cancer awareness. She replied, "No, we had breast cancer, the three of us. It was the real thing."

A member of the Holiness church, a Christian faith which does not believe in women cutting their hair, Ms. McGill said acquaintances around town praised her "haircut." She explained to them that her new appearance was because she had lost her hair to chemotherapy.

Ms. McGill said, "The Lord really helped me and sent a message to me. I had to learn what that faith is and I have to have a good attitude to magnify God and not cancer through all of this. Everyone has to do what's right for them."

**continued page 12**



## **Holiday Safety Tips**

**Never leave  
stoves, fireplaces,  
space heaters  
or candles  
unattended.**

**Do not burn gift  
wrapping paper  
in the fireplace.  
This can cause a  
flash fire.**

**Do not block  
your fire escape  
routes with trees  
or other holiday  
decorations.**

**Check smoke  
alarms before  
you begin  
decorating.  
Install carbon  
monoxide  
detectors on each  
level of your  
home.**

**Use a sturdy  
ladder when  
decorating trees  
or outdoors;  
never stand  
on a chair or  
furniture.**

**Do not place  
extension cords  
in high-traffic  
areas, under  
rugs or across  
walkways.**

**Avoid putting  
small “mouth-  
sized”  
decorations and  
lights where  
they can be  
easily reached  
by children or  
pets.**

**Alcohol, liquid in  
bubble lights and  
fake snow can  
be poisonous to  
children.**

**Leaving a box by  
the curb can let  
potential burglars  
know what new  
items you have in  
your home. Break  
down boxes and  
put them in the  
trash.**

**Do not change  
voicemail or  
announce on  
social media  
that you will be  
leaving town.**

## 'Just Screen Em' A Winner

The Marshall County Health Department team, "Just Screen 'Em," participated in the Second Annual Pink Pumpkin 5K Run/Walk on Oct. 29. This event is sponsored by the Marshall Medical Center Foundation to support the Mammogram Assistance Program. The Health Department had 21 employees, friends and family register for the Pink Pumpkin Run, and 16 teams members participate on race day. The Health Department team won first place in the team name category.



## 'Pink Out CHS' Luncheon Held

The Record Services Division of the Center for Health Statistics showed its support of breast cancer research, remembered those who have passed away, and rejoiced with those who have been diagnosed and survived the disease. To show their support, division employees dressed in denim and wore pink Breast Cancer Month T-shirts. The office was decorated with "Pinky" pink peonies and roses covered the tables. In the photograph, from left to right, are Record Services Director Nicole Henderson, Shenika Sellers Scott, Betty Thomas, Charlese Wright, State Registrar Cathy Molchan, Veronica Moore-Whitfield, Joy Williams, Tanya Haynes, Jody Mitchell and Glenda Adams. Not pictured are Yalisa Whatley, Tamekia Lewis and Deputy Director of Record Services Annette Johnson Bell.



## Beauty and the Beast Fund Honors Elaine Goodman

Elaine Goodman covers 12 counties within Public Health Areas 2, 5 and 6 working with the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. She was asked to attend the Beauty and the Beast banquet on Oct. 21 to raise money for the organization.

"Little did Elaine know as she joined in the festivities she would be honored for all her hard work, the tons of paperwork involved and for helping women get enrolled in Medicaid," co-worker Krystal Casey said.

The Beauty and the Beast fund was established in 2008 after several individuals realized the importance of helping breast cancer patients in Jackson County. The "Beauty" is the person honored and the "Beast," of course, is the horrible symbol of breast cancer. The organization's ultimate goal is to lend financial support to individuals for breast cancer only. It is a nonprofit organization serving women and men in Jackson County.

### *Inspiration, continued from page 10*

The three survivors praised the support of their public health co-workers for filling in the gaps for them during their absences. The nurse and two clerical staff members are among just 12 employees working in the clinic. When the women finished their chemo in August, the Jackson County Health Department staff held a survivor's luncheon for them.

"All of them were very helpful, understanding and patient," Ms. Mitchell said of her colleagues.

A positive outcome is that as a result of their experiences, breast cancer awareness has been heightened. "Everyone here is a lot more aware of the importance of self breast checks, from WIC moms to Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program patients," Ms. Williams said.



## DeKalb County Activities Further Breast Cancer Awareness

In observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the staff at the DeKalb County Health Department wanted to show its support in the battle against breast cancer. Clinic supervisor Michelle Marlow designed custom T-shirts, stating: "We the people unite in the Breast Cancer Fight." Employees were able to purchase a shirt to wear on Fridays during the month of October.

"We know so many are impacted by breast cancer each year, whether themselves, a family member or friend, so we planted a Tree of Hope in the front lobby," Office Manager Krystal Casey said. Employees as well as patients were encouraged to hang a pink ribbon on the tree and write in memory of or in honor of someone they knew who had battled breast cancer.

In addition to sporting T-shirts and decorating the Tree of Hope, staff members hung a large pink bow on the front door and hoisted a banner that read, "We Support Breast Cancer Awareness Month," to show to all those who entered the DeKalb County Health Department. A celebration also was held to recognize those women who have fought the fight against breast cancer.



**Employees decorated the Tree of Hope for the lobby.**



**Staff members posed for this photo to support breast cancer awareness in DeKalb County.**

## New Format Provided For Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Training

Studies have shown that Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs help to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among WIC participants. There are currently 27 peer counseling sites across the state, and plans are in place to continue expanding to additional sites.

Peer counselors are WIC participants who previously breastfed or are currently breastfeeding their infant. The peer counselors provide basic breastfeeding information and support to pregnant or breastfeeding mothers that participate in the WIC Program.

All peer counselors are required to complete standard formal training after they are hired.

In October, Michell Grainger and Alexis Aday, the department's State Lactation Coordinator and the State Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator respectively, attended a United States Department of Agriculture management training and train-the-trainer event sponsored by the U.S.D.A. Southeast Regional Office.

The training, "Loving Support Through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together," provides a new format for presenting

the peer counselor training material. The new design appeals to one's emotions, resulting in improved memory and recall of the information presented.

The WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program looks forward to the opportunities the new training format provides and the continued expansion of the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program.

For more information, contact State Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator Alexis Aday at (334) 206-2952.

*By Alexis Aday*



# ADPH Road Warriors Step Out in Tuscaloosa

Employees of Public Health Area 3 participated in the 5K Step Out Walk for Diabetes, held in Tuscaloosa on Sept. 10. The team name was the ADPH Road Warriors and was comprised of Tuscaloosa County Home Health nurses, Life Care nurses, E/D Waiver social workers, area educators, and their families and friends.

"We wanted to participate in this walk because being public health employees, we see Alabamians affected by diabetes on a daily basis. We wanted to do our part and help with the fundraising efforts of the American Diabetes Association. This walk was the first for all of us and we all completed it."

As a result of participating in the walk, several team members realized the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and the importance of routine exercise. They continue to walk three to four times per week in order to stay in shape.

"So we not only helped the American Diabetes Association, we also helped ourselves," Mary Sewell, Home Health supervisor, said. "As team captain, I was really proud of my team."

The team had only about one month to collect donations, but the Road Warriors raised more than \$1,500 for the American Diabetes Association. They thanked everyone who participated in the fundraising and the walk; Tammy Yager, Area 3 Administrator; and Angela Buchanan, Area 3 Director; for their support.

Ms. Sewell said, "We had a wonderful time, we looked good and we represented ADPH. We all finished the walk. Yes, I have to admit, the HILL, which Debbie Hobbs, Area 3 business manager renamed 'Mount Everest,' almost made us have second thoughts, but we were true Road Warriors and we pressed on! The weather was beautiful and there were lots of people there."

It was reported that there were over 350 registered walkers. Seven team members raised over \$100: Valerie Wilson, E/D waiver social worker; Janene Woods, Home Health LPN; Lana Somers, Home Health RN; Debbie Hobbs, Area 3 Business Manager; Bernice Witherspoon, Home Health Contract RN; Marsha Burroughs, Home Health Supervisor; and Ms. Sewell. Ms. Wilson raised the largest amount,

approximately \$330. Janene Woods ran a close second with \$200.

Several employee were "virtual" walkers: Juanna Acker, Debra Bell, Lashundra Bias, Angela Buchanan, Marsha Burroughs, Mandy Dockery, Tammy Foster, Sharon Hawkins, Angela Pullins, Sally Shipman and Alma Tutwiler.



**T-shirts for participants commemorated the April 27 tornadoes and recovery.**



**Public health employees turned out for the 5K walk in Tuscaloosa.**



## Responders Receive Radiation Response Incident Training

Emergency responders from throughout the state participated in radiation response incident training in Montgomery on Oct. 27. The Office of Radiation Control appreciates the support provided by county and area health administrators and employees statewide for this important program to safeguard the health of Alabama communities.



## Butler County Health Department Presented Men's Health Award

Health departments throughout Alabama observed Men's Health Month during June by conducting health education and outreach activities. Social Work Director Maury West presented Public Health Area 9 Administrator Ricky Elliott the first Men's Health Award, and he in turn presented the plaque to the Butler County staff at an Oct. 18 staff meeting.

"Hope Steadham did a great job coordinating activities in PHA 9 to promote National Men's Health Month, as did Betty Dawson and the staff of the Butler County Health Department," Elliott said.

Six of the eight counties in the area conducted several different activities. Tray liners promoting men's health were distributed by Hardee's, and the restaurant also provided free turkey burgers. Butler County Health Department, in partnership with Urology Centers of Alabama, conducted a free prostate cancer clinic where 91 men were screened.

Elliott said, "I am very excited and proud of Butler County for winning the inaugural Men's Health Award, and I am appreciative of the response and participation from PHA 9 staff in promoting men's health. Although awards are fun and exciting to receive, the real winners are the men

who heard the message and took steps to improve their health. Public health is all about prevention. Promoting National Men's Health Month is just one facet of the many educational preventive measures that the department performs. I am excited to see the ADPH taking the lead in this effort."



**Shown, left to right, are Ziba Anderson, Butler County Health Department administrator; Hope Steadham, case manager and PHA 9 Men's Health coordinator; Betty Dawson, case manager and Men's Health Coordinator, Butler County; and Ricky Elliott, PHA 9 administrator.**



# Calendar of Events



## December 2

Family Advocacy and Involvement in the Title V Programs, noon-1:30 p.m.

For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.

## May 10-11, 2012

Alabama Public Health Association 56th Annual Health Education Conference and Meeting, Wynfrey Hotel, Riverchase Galleria, Hoover.

For more information visit [alphassoc.org](http://alphassoc.org).

## Parents Advised to Have their Homes and Children Tested for Lead

Nearly a quarter of a million children living in the United States have blood lead levels high enough to cause significant damage to their health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates, based on data from a 2003–2004 national survey. Major sources of lead exposure among U.S. children are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust found in deteriorating buildings.

Despite the continued presence of lead in the environment, lead poisoning is entirely preventable. “If high blood lead levels are not detected early, children with such high levels of lead in their bodies can suffer from damage to the brain and nervous system,” Dr. Tom Miller, deputy director for medical affairs, said. “They can also develop behavior and learning problems (such as hyperactivity), slowed growth, hearing problems, and aggressive patterns of behavior.”

Parents can reduce a child’s exposure to lead in many ways. Here are some simple steps to help protect your family:

- Get your home tested. Before you buy an older home, ask for a lead inspection.
- Get your child tested. Even if your young children seem healthy, ask your doctor to test them for lead.
- Get the facts! Local health departments can provide helpful information about preventing childhood lead poisoning.

According to Jacqueline Harris, director, Alabama Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, all children should be tested for lead poisoning at 12 and 24 months of age as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. For more information, call Ms. Harris at (334) 206-2966 or toll free at 1-800-545-1098.

## ‘Spice’ or ‘K2’ Removed from Alabama Store Shelves

Brandon Murphy’s family shared the story of his life to warn others of the dangers of a synthetic hallucinogen substance known by the street names of “Spice” or “K2” in an effort to make changes in the law. An honors student, Brandon had been awarded a full college scholarship and aspired to become a doctor. But after he and a friend had been smoking “Spice,” just two to three hours later he took his own life. An empty package of the legally obtained substance along with a receipt were found in his car after his death.

The department heard testimony about this hallucinogen at a public hearing on Sept. 19. The psychoactive herbal and chemical substances were sold in a variety of stores and marketed online as herbal incense or potpourri. Law

enforcement officers, members of the medical community and others provided information about the abuses, risks and adverse events associated with its use.

Following the hearing and with the support of the State Committee of Public Health, State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson signed an emergency order making the possession or sale of chemical compounds typically found in synthetic marijuana substances unlawful. The substances were placed under Schedule I of the Alabama Controlled Substances List and authorization was made to begin the required public comment process to amend Schedule I of the Controlled Substances List. The Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board ordered it removed from store shelves and has seized millions of dollars worth of the product.