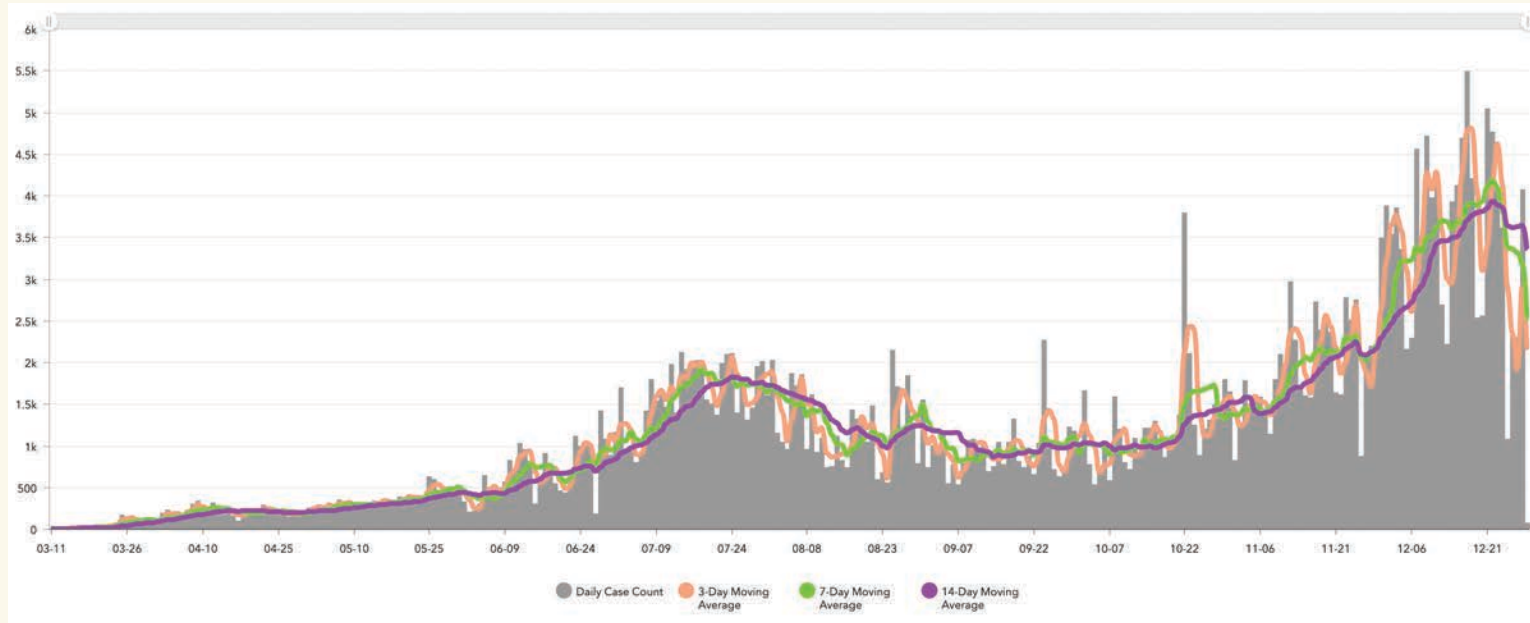


ALABAMA'S HEALTH

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Daily Number and Moving Averages of COVID-19 Cases by Date of Report (Statewide)

The department's dashboard provides updated data and surveillance information about coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Alabama.

Alabama at a Crossroads: COVID-19 Vaccine Provides Hope

State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris noted in a holiday message to all employees that the COVID-19 response has presented many challenges and opportunities over the past 9 months. Selfless professionals have worked long, difficult hours in taking the "all hands on deck" approach to the ever-changing situation of the pandemic. He thanked the dedicated employees of the Alabama Department of Public Health for their continued service to fellow Alabamians.

In an email to employees, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mary McIntyre wrote, "We have all faced the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought us. Many of you have been personally impacted by this disease with the loss of family or friends just as I have. Some of you have become ill yourselves and survived. We are at a crossroads where we can see a light at the end of the tunnel but only if as many people as can be

vaccinated, are vaccinated. This is really our biggest hope of being able to return to some semblance of normal or a new normal. We need to all understand that this will not be immediate and that we have many months still ahead of us where we need to continue to practice social distancing, wear face coverings, etc., but this vaccine provides us with hope.

While there are still unknowns about these vaccines such as how long immunity will last and whether we will need to do take annual shots like with the flu vaccine, we know that the two vaccines approved so far are 95 percent effective in preventing COVID-19 infection and almost 100 percent effective in preventing severe COVID-19 disease. No persons taking the vaccine have died and while some people experience side effects after taking the vaccine, these are mostly mild or moderate. The side effects we are

continued on page 3

U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams Speaks in Birmingham

State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris looks on as U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams addresses the news media in Birmingham on September 21. Dr. Adams announced that free drive-through COVID-19 testing sites would be offered. The Surgeon General emphasized that everyone needs to remember the three Ws: Wash your hands, Wear a mask, Watch your distance.



Alabama National Guard Presents Commission to Hatch

Brig. Gen. Jerry Martin presents Tim Hatch a commission "as an honorary colonel of the Colonel William Oates' Alabama Volunteer Guards of the Alabama Unorganized Militia" as Hatch transfers from his position as incident manager for the COVID-19 response to serve as Assistant District Administrator for the East Central Public Health District. The commission was signed by Major General Sheryl E. Gordon, Adjutant General, and was given in recognition of his "untiring and steadfast support to the Alabama National Guard."



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

Alabama's Health is an official publication of the Alabama Department of Public Health, Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support. If you would like to receive the publication or wish to submit information for future articles, please telephone requests to (334) 206-5300. Articles may be reprinted provided credit is given to the Alabama Department of Public Health. The department's website is alabamapublichealth.gov.

Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H. State Health Officer

Jamey Durham, M.B.A. Director, Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support

Arrol Sheehan, M.A. Editor

Noelle Ahmann Graphic Designer

Vaccine, continued from page 1

currently aware of as well as who was included in the vaccine trials can be found at the following link;

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/assets/cov-pfizer-moderna-vaccine-trial-summary-1page.pdf>

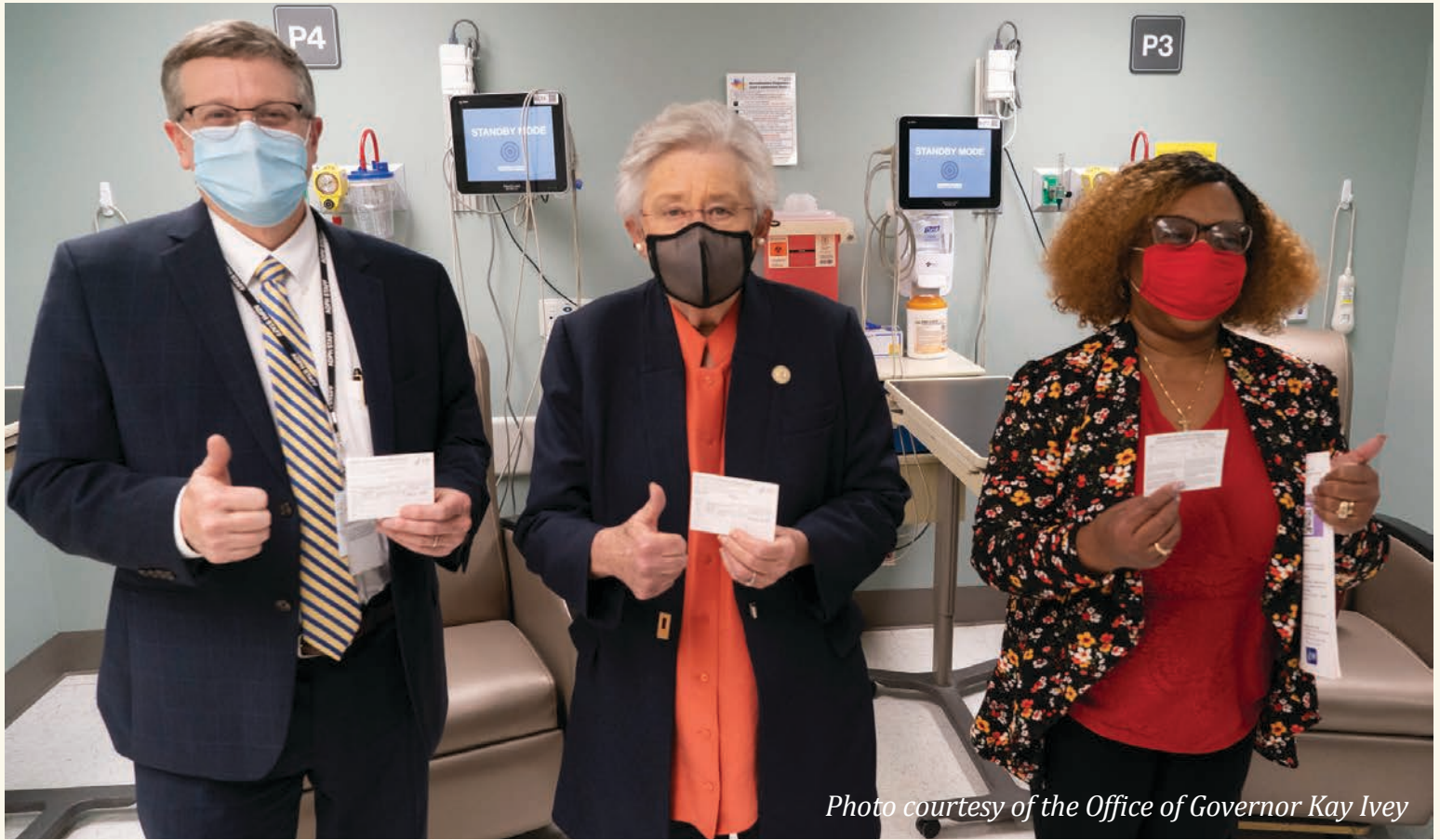


Photo courtesy of the Office of Governor Kay Ivey

Shown immediately after receiving their first doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine on December 14 in Montgomery, State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris, Gov. Kay Ivey, and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mary McIntyre are shown holding their vaccine record cards.

Coronavirus Task Force Head Meets with State Leaders

White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx, left, meets with Gov. Kay Ivey and State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris October 9 at the State Capitol. Dr. Birx emphasized the critical need to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. A roundtable discussion with state health care professionals, members of the business and faith communities, and lawmakers followed.



Photo courtesy of the Office of Governor Kay Ivey

Alabama Public Television Program Provides Regular Statewide Coverage of COVID-19

At the outset of the coronavirus pandemic in March, the host of the weekly public affairs program Capitol Journal invited State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris to update viewers on the new virus affecting Alabamians. Week after week, the invitation has been issued, and Dr. Harris has made more than 37 appearances on the program viewed on public television stations throughout the state.

The hour-long statewide broadcast allows a more in-depth discussion of topics, and Dr. Harris' calming demeanor and thorough explanations have drawn praise from many quarters. Host Don Dailey, news and public affairs director for Alabama Public Television, said he frequently receives positive feedback from viewers who tune in especially to keep up with any COVID-19 news in Alabama.

Initially, topics centered on explaining the need for safer at home health orders and why COVID-19 precautions are necessary. There have been surges in cases, especially following the Memorial Day and Independence Day holidays, but with the institution of mask mandates the numbers of illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths in Alabama have stabilized. Recent discussions on the program include rapid testing methods and their limitations and upcoming vaccine distribution plans.



Host Don Dailey interviews State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris in the State House studio in Montgomery on October 1. One change that producers made due to COVID-19 was to extend the space between the seats of Dailey and Dr. Harris on the set.

As COVID-19 continues to dominate the news, and Dr. Harris appreciates the opportunity to inform Alabamians through the nine stations located in urban and rural areas throughout the state.

Drive-through Flu Clinic Held in Montgomery

Employees of the East Central District braved the winds following Tropical Storm Zeta to conduct a drive-through influenza clinic October 29 at Eastdale Mall in Montgomery. The public found the drive-through option

was both convenient and safer by avoiding in-person visits to their healthcare providers' offices when COVID-19 was circulating. In addition to the drive-through, other staff members gave flu shots indoors near the mall's food court.



Move to New State Laboratory, Administrative and Training Center in Prattville Accomplished Despite Pandemic



Photo credit: Photo courtesy of HDR © 2020 Chris Luker

The new Donald E. Williamson, M.D., State Health Laboratory, is located at 204 Legends Court in Prattville

Improved efficiency, productivity and flexibility for the future are provided in newly constructed Alabama Department of Public Health facilities.

Planning for a \$30 million laboratory building project began in 2013 when a feasibility study was conducted. The 1970's era former state laboratory on the campus of Auburn University at Montgomery had more than \$1 million in deferred maintenance needs. Prime consideration for the study included the need for improved biosafety and biosecurity to ensure employee safety and continued compliance with national regulatory requirements. Five different locations were proposed before the 12-acre site at Legends Park at HomePlace was finally chosen for the laboratory and adjacent offices and training facility. The location overlooking the Robert Trent Jones golf course was announced in December 2017.

The formal ribbon cutting for the department's Donald E. Williamson, M.D., State Health Laboratory, the Training Center, and Administrative Annex was planned for April 8, 2020, with Governor Kay Ivey and local dignitaries scheduled to speak. The laboratory employees were to move in June or July of 2020, upon substantial completion of the new facility and Administrative Annex employees move date was scheduled for April 9, 2020.

When the first case of COVID-19 in the state was reported, however, plans changed. Kristi Rollins, acting director of the Office of Facilities Management, said, "Much of the momentum that the project regained after the holidays stalled as the country and then our state began to shut down. From March 13 through April 30 the project hobbled along slowly but surely, tying up loose ends while social distancing on the project work sites.

"When the state reopened, the project began to move into high gear and deadlines again reappeared," Ms. Rollins said. "Our mover for the Office of Radiation Control, Center for Emergency Preparedness and the Office of Emergency Medical Services had availability at the beginning of July and we quickly determined that these employees could be in their new home by July 4th. The excitement of the new facility, coupled with the nervousness of what the virus would do next, kept us busy planning the move details and hoping the contractor's workers could remain healthy and supplied to complete the project on time."

Substantial completion of the 23,607 square foot administrative office space facility was achieved mid-June. Then, approximately 75 Alabama Department of Public Health employees along with 25 of the

continued on page 6

COVID-19 Incident Command Response Team members relocated to the Training Center and Administrative Annex before July 3.

"We met our July 4th goal! It was a huge milestone for the department," Ms. Rollins said. The laboratory, the more complicated and larger of the buildings at 65,909 square feet, was still under construction and had a few more weeks of work before its completion. The laboratory relocation took place at the end of August and over the Labor Day holiday weekend under leadership of Drs. Sharon Massingale and Aretha Williams, director and assistant director of the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories. The move involved approximately 110 laboratory employees, 6 Newborn Screening Follow-Up employees from the RSA Tower, and 3 National Guard members assisting with improving workflow efficiency for the move. Due to careful planning, the COVID-19 testing staff were able to continue to test throughout the move. A move of the magnitude of a public health laboratory normally is done in phases and occurs over several weeks; however, the laboratory directors' persistence and guidance led to accomplishing the task in less than 10 days.

"Staff understood what needed to be done and worked with us to help meet our goals. Dr. Williams worked tirelessly with the movers and staff to coordinate activities for a safe and smooth move," stated Dr. Massingale. Dr. Williams noted, "It was certainly a team effort. While we had a few instruments damaged in transition, the overall move was a huge success."

Although the buildings were substantially complete before the move, the building contractor continues working on some unfinished projects. All in all, the move involved 225 employees and their workstations, chairs, offices, 3 conference rooms, 3 training rooms and a training laboratory.

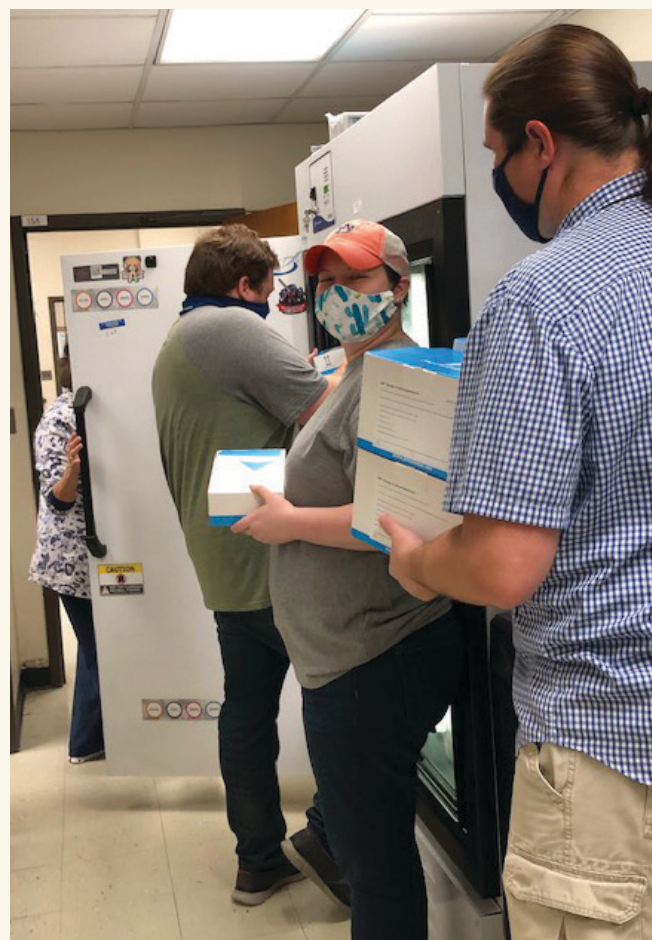
"It felt like a miracle," Ms. Rollins said. "We all stuck with our goal and kept going forward." Laboratory staff never skipped a beat as they completed their instrument and protocol validations to allow them to get their tests back up and running. Since being at the new laboratory, staff have had two national regulatory inspections, one less than a month after moving in. Both Drs. Massingale and Williams are proud of the new facility as it allows their staff to perform laboratory science in a state-of-the-art facility.

A current project is putting finishing touches on the Public Health and Laboratory "museums." Ms. Rollins added, "I'm sure there will be a portion reserved in both for the events of 2020!"

Kristi Rollins



Seven-day-a-week testing for COVID-19 was not interrupted during the relocation.



A great deal of work was required before, during and after moving. Garrett Weathers, Randi Dean and Johnathan Bozeman prepare for the move.

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Photo credit: Photo courtesy of HDR © 2020 Chris Luker

Laboratory Director Dr. Sharon Massingale and Assistant Director Dr. Aretha Williams staged in this shot of the entrance of the new laboratory. They spent countless hours in the planning for the building and the move.

Kudos to Staff

Planning for Move Saves Money and Time

Relocating employees from Montgomery to Prattville involved a lot of logistical challenges, but the staff of the Bureau of Information Technology were up to the task. Planning had been underway for about a year, and the move itself was done in two days instead of the anticipated week and one-half. They not only set up computers and phones, they accomplished much of the move themselves. Comments about the move and new offices follow.

Thank you for the outstanding job you did wiring those two buildings. It was a job on a massive scale for such a small crew. A year spent on this one job and not one single complaint from anyone, only praise from others who were also working at the site. The amount of money you saved the department by handling the

wiring has to be incredible. I couldn't be more thankful that we have such a good team and I just want you all to know how much I appreciate each of you.

*Mark Skelton, Director, Technical Support
Bureau of Information Technology*

Office of Emergency Medical Services in Prattville Helps Logistics and Planning

We feel that this move to the new Administrative Annex and Training Center in Prattville represents another significant milestone for the Alabama Department of Public Health and for the Office of Emergency Medical Services. The new office space accommodates our team and enables us to benefit from new technology and to continue to provide industry-leading service and convenience to our licensees on a daily basis.

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Jann Fomby and Valerie Green happily stop in the middle of packing to pose on moving day, August 28.



Laboratory managers Angelica Webb, Danita Rollin and Evelyn Geeter give each other a "virtual high-five" as they negotiate storage space at new facility.



Prevention, Promotion and Support employees receive Cisco Webex training at the new Training Center.



Special care had to be taken when moving laboratory equipment. More than one company was used.

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.

Georgette Blackmon

Center for Health
Statistics
from Terra Foster
Athens, Ala.
Carrie Hicks
Georgia

Tony Brewer

Cliff Boyd
Monty Carroll
Robert Kelly
Chris Lochte
Josh McCarthy
Ronnie McLendon
Luke Mayben
David Newman
Mark Skelton
and others

Bureau of Information
Technology
from Keith Higginbotham
Montgomery, Ala.

Kathie Cleckler

Center for Health
Statistics
from Malika Wallace
Killeen, Texas
Sherry Starling
Birmingham, Ala.

Karen Drew

Center for Health
Statistics
from Joseph Barnette
Belmont, N.C.

Betty File

Center for Health
Statistics
from State Sen. Tom Butler
Alabama State House
Montgomery, Ala.

Katrina Haney

Center for Health
Statistics
from Linda Scott
Hartford, Conn.

Brittany Marzette

Center for Health
Statistics
from Matthew McKay
South Carolina

David Newman

Wesley White
Information Technology
from Tim Hatch
Prattville, Ala.

Georgia Reynolds

Center for Health
Statistics
from Tawanna Johnson
Mobile, Ala.
Melissa Patterson
Huntsville, Ala.

Tamekie Washington

Center for Health
Statistics
from Ms. Mary
Frances Griffith
Chattanooga, Tenn.
Ms. Shanta Williams
York, Ala.

LaShunda Williams

Center for Health
Statistics
from Terrance Mauldin
Los Angeles, Calif.

Home Health Aide Week Celebrated

The East Central Public Health District celebrated Home Health Aide Week in Autauga and Lee counties. Even though they were not able to gather for an extended celebration, the offices were able to follow COVID-19 precautions and celebrate home health aides' dedication to patients while providing essential care during the ongoing pandemic. Staff members decorated and provided refreshments in honor of these essential team members during the week of November 8-14. Home health aide Shantel Adams is pictured.



Retirees

The following departmental employees have retired recently:

June

Velma Heikkinen

Northern District

Denise Pope

Family Health Services

Sherry Reeves

Northern District

July

Lenita Akles

Northeastern District

Robert Boyles

Prevention, Promotion,
and Support

Betty Dawson

Southeastern District

Helen Henderson

West Central District

Kathy Law

Emergency Medical Services

Cora Long

East Central District

Paul Moore

Northeastern District

Charlynda Pierce

Clinical Laboratories

Aimee Willis

Immunization Division

August

Kimberly Fraser

West Central District

Annetta Henderson

Southwestern District

Brenda Moulton

Southeastern District

Janis Pritchett

Financial Services

Ola Starkes

Southeastern District

September

Teresa Alexander

Northeastern District

Patsy Beasley

Financial Services

Kathie Burtram

Northeastern District

Angela Cook

Northern District

Penny Dickert

Southeastern District

Annette Lannon

Southeastern District

Sandra Loveday

Information Technology

Kathy McCormack

Northern District

Emma Reeves

Southeastern District

Arlinda Stiff

Northeastern District

October

Anita Batemon

Northern District

Jeffrey Chism

West Central District

Kristy Howell

West Central District

Randy Northam

West Central District

Brenda Ray

Southwestern District

Fern Shinbaum

CHIP

November

Wanda Cotter

Environmental Services

Kaye Dunn

Southwestern District

Betty Durham

Southeastern District

Melissa Godwin

Family Health Services

December

Earnest Brooks

Clinical Laboratories

Betty Helms

Clinical Laboratories

John Hooper

Emergency Preparedness

Influenza Immunization Promoted

The Alabama Department of Public Health, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama (MASA) and the Alabama Hospital Association joined forces to promote influenza vaccination. Dr. Burnestine Taylor, Medical Officer for Disease Control and Prevention, and Dr. Martin Wyzenga spoke with the news media about its importance, especially with COVID-19 this flu season. MASA employee Amanda Griffith is pictured receiving a flu shot from Joanne Gilliland, Wellness Division nurse on November 6.



Alabama People Against a Littered State (AL PALS) Presents Award to Jonika Smith

Environmental health specialist, Jonika Smith, of the Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH) is to receive the 2020 AL PALS Governor's Award, the Jean McRady Service Award in recognition for her ongoing work, dedication and enthusiasm to clean up and reduce litter in and around Jefferson County, local waterways and various communities.

In notifying her of this honor, Hana Burwinkle Berres, education training coordinator with the Jefferson County Department of Development Services, called her by a nickname "aka, the water keeper herself." Ms. Berres wrote, "Please accept our congratulations on being selected to receive this prestigious award as well as our appreciation for your community's continued efforts to make Jefferson County a safer and more beautiful place for residents to live, work and play."

Ms. Smith works in the JCDH Watershed Protection Program, a part of Environmental Health, where, in addition to other duties, she works to educate and provide outreach for 21 cities which comprise the Storm Water Management Authority, Inc. (SWMA). One of the many initiatives that she has spearheaded is the incorporation of the AL PALS Spring Cleanup opportunity into existing SWMA city cleanups; educating residents about the harmful effects of litter on people, property and the environment; and providing materials and support to participating communities.

"Jonika has been a critical part of our outreach regarding issues surrounding water quality, litter and its effects, and other health related issues. She is a valuable part of our outreach here at JCDH because she always greets everyone with a smile, can connect in ways few can, and is always willing to assist." Jonathan Stanton, Director of Environmental Services, and Jeff Swinney, Community Environmental Protection Division, said.

Nominators outlined her many accomplishments over the past 6 years in working with multiple city councils and communities to engage their residents in planning, organizing and implementing cleanups that incorporated AL PALS. Her work has resulted in 3,466 volunteers participating in 88 cleanups during which 131 tons of litter and trash were removed from roadways and properly disposed. She has played a major role in annual cleanups.



Jonika Smith

In addition, she has been an integral part of the Litter Quitters High School Anti-Litter Video Competition since its inception in 2018. Ms. Smith contacted high school principals and teachers, scheduled and implemented presentations at participating high schools, appeared in television segments promoting Litter Quitters, and facilitated the presentation of prizes and other recognition for the winning high schools.

She has kept a dedication and passion for providing residents with opportunities to improve their quality of life by reducing litter, reminding others of their value within the environment, and how each person can work for their communities.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, an awards luncheon will not be held, but a local awards presentation will be held at a later date.

State Health Officer Named 2020 Community Hero

The Montgomery Advertiser has named State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris the November recipient of the newspaper's 2020 Community Hero Award. A front-page article by Brad Harper in the Sunday, November 15, issue titled "Pathfinder: Dr. Scott Harris on a mission to guide Alabama through COVID Crisis," focuses on how Dr. Harris has worked to provide accurate information on which to base policy and to inform the public during the pandemic.

The article describes the current situation with cases rising, businesses closing, and the deaths of thousands of Alabamians. Reluctant to accept the attention "that might be misread as victory lap and a signal that the danger is over," the reporter stated, Dr. Harris "acquiesces, but only to discuss the urgency of the moment."

Tributes abound came from Gov. Kay Ivey, Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed, Dr. Don Williamson, former State Health Officer and President/CEO of the Alabama Hospital Association; Lynn Beshear, Alabama Mental Health Commissioner; Dr. Mark Wilson, Jefferson County Health Officer; Perman Hardy, community activist; Al Head, former director of the Alabama State Council on the Arts; and Craig Babb, a neighbor.

The article noted that the facial covering health order enacted in July resulted in a lower rate of illness and death than in surrounding states. Dr. Harris praised public health employees who care about their fellow Alabamians, try to do their best, work long hours, do not get paid very much, and who sometimes take a lot of abuse from those they are helping. The article described Dr. Harris' full support for a onsite sewage disposal systems for low-income residents of Lowndes County, even though public health is a regulatory agency.

Dr. Harris again cautioned about "COVID fatigue" that is turning into new cases as the influenza season begins and while families are making decisions about whether to participate in holiday gatherings. Nevertheless, the article reported, Alabamians on the whole are doing their best to mask up, keep their distance, and stay safe through a very difficult year.

A local law firm sponsors the monthly award, and Dr. Harris is the first public official to be honored since the designation began 11 months ago.

Madison County Medical Society Board Honors Dr. Harris

In a virtual presentation on December 3, the Madison County Medical Society Board of Trustees recognized State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris for his contributions to medicine and the community in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Members were invited to join the meeting honoring Dr. Harris via livestream.



State Dental Health Director Commended for COVID-19 Work

State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris made a surprise presentation of a letter of commendation from Dr. Zack Studstill, Alabama Dental Association executive director, to State Dental Health Director Dr. Tommy Johnson. The presentation was made at a Central Office staff meeting September 3.

Dr. Studstill described Dr. Johnson as “a vital link that I and other depend on regularly. He is effective, well-liked, and gets the job done.” In the letter to Dr. Harris, Dr. Studstill wrote, “In my opinion, Dr. Johnson’s ‘can do’ spirit is an excellent example of the service State of Alabama employees offer every day, but are not recognized adequately for that service.”

In working with the Alabama Dental Association, the Board of Dental Examiners of Alabama, Alabama Department of Public Health administration, the Governor’s Office, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Johnson recommended safe dental office protocols for patients seeking emergency dental treatment and later elective dental treatment.

“When dental offices statewide were in dire need of procuring adequate face masks to continue treating patients, Dr. Johnson was instrumental in securing KN95

masks,” Dr. Studstill wrote. “He then picked up the masks at the state warehouse and delivered them to our office in a flatbed truck. Not satisfied with just delivering the masks, he helped unload the numerous boxes of masks and store them in a POD storage until dentists from all over Alabama could come to Montgomery and pick up their allotment of donated masks.”

“It is such an honor to be recognized by an organization such as the Alabama Dental Association. But I would be remiss in my role by not also sharing this honor with everyone that made it possible. If anything good has come out of COVID-19, the unique and sometimes unexpected bonds forged by people and organizations during these unprecedented times are invaluable. Without the help of the Center for Emergency Preparedness, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Alabama Emergency Management Agency, ADPH Warehouse personnel, Unified Command, Alabama Forestry Commission, and countless others, the personal protective equipment provisions would not have been possible. It makes me happy to be in a position that I was—and continue to be—the conduit through which the supplies are channeled.”



KN95 masks and face shields were delivered to the UAB School of Dentistry. Dr. Tommy Johnson, left, is shown with Dr. Russell Taichman, Dean.

In Memoriam - Mrs. Cynthia 'Cyndi' Tereszkievicz

Cynthia Ann "Cyndi" Tereszkievicz passed away peacefully at home surrounded by her family on December 9 after fighting a long battle with cancer.

She graduated from Troy University in 1976 with a degree in Environmental Science. Cyndi had been employed with the Alabama Department of Public Health since 1997, most recently working in Montgomery as the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for East Central and Southeastern counties for the state of Alabama. Prior to moving to Auburn, John and Cyndi resided in Dothan from 1996 – 2018. Cyndi always made family her priority, often spending any free minute she had with them.

Cyndi always believed that it was important to have God, family and health in her life. She made a point to live each day as it came and to enjoy what it brought because there are no guarantees for tomorrow. Despite facing obstacles and challenges she always kept a positive attitude and tried her best to think of others first and often.

Cyndi is survived by her husband of 39 years, John Josef Tereszkievicz, and others including her father, four children and two grandchildren.

Colleagues offered these tributes:

Cyndi T was such a great person to work beside. She touched so many lives and did what she could not only for Emergency Preparedness, but for the entire District. We saw her not only as a co-worker, but a friend and part of our 'work family.'"

*Connie King, Assistant District Administrator
East Central District*

I only worked with Cyndi for a few years, but she made a lasting impression. She was a hard worker and made sure that I was informed of any preparedness issues in our district. That, however, is not what I will remember most. I have seen the effects of cancer on many family members over the years, and I knew Cyndi was a fighter from day one. We had several deep, meaningful heart-to-heart discussions the past few years. She had one of the best, most positive attitudes toward the challenges in her life, and that is what I will always remember. Cyndi will be missed greatly here in the East Central District.

*Richard W. Burleson, District Administrator
East Central District*

I worked with Cyndi many years and I will always remember the way she always had a positive outlook on life. She had a way of making others feel good and made others feel important. She was trustworthy, dependable and faithful. She never gave up and never failed to smile through even

when she received disappointing health news. She loved her role in Public Health and was a true leader.



Cynthia "Cyndi" Tereszkievicz

*Peggy Hagler
Emergency Preparedness Director
Southeastern District*

We in Macon County and the Macon County Emergency Management Agency/ Department of Homeland Security all benefited from the hard work and dedication in the area of emergency preparedness. Cyndi worked diligently, even in recent weeks, to assist in planning our COVID-19 testing in Macon County. Her very pleasant personality and kindness was always present and she always was most helpful when we called on her for assistance. Cyndi's kind and very helping work ethic will always be remembered. Her dedication and hard work certainly will be missed. On behalf of our agency and the citizens of Macon County, we send condolences to her family and her co-workers at ADPH. God Bless.

*Frank H. Lee, Director
Macon County Emergency Management Agency/
Department of Homeland Security*

She was an extraordinary individual who touched the lives of so many through her public health career. We miss her greatly. She truly had a public health heart.

*Ricky Elliott, MPH
Director of Field Operations*

Cyndi was one of less than a dozen Public Health Environmentalists in the state who held a national

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Legacy of Helping Others Continues for Family

On one hot day in July, a Montgomery County family reached out to Connie King, assistant administrator of the East Central District, in hopes of showing appreciation to the frontline staff involved in drive-up COVID-19 testing by donating goody bags to staff.

Ms. King said she was gratified to know that others “not only see the dedication and hard work of our employees but took the time to show their appreciation.” When given the okay, the family assembled 110 bags filled with bottled water and snacks and delivered them to the employees staffing drive-up COVID-19 testing clinics.

The family provided this description of why they were inspired to make the donation:

Our family has always been our greatest example for helping others; hearing stories of our grandparents and other family members before us using the little they had to help so many only inspired us to continue that legacy. We decided to make care packages for the essential workers as a way for us to personally say, THANK YOU and WE APPRECIATE YOU!

Our hope is that such a small treat can help be a reminder to the workers that we care and can't express how grateful we are for their selfless and tireless efforts to keep so many safe. Not only have we been able to supply care packages, but also donate school supplies to a homeless shelter, and donate over 150 handmade, fabric masks to cancer patients, nursing homes, elderly, a children's hospital, and to various other individuals and organizations; with more in production.

As a family, we are blessed to be able to use our gifts, talents, and resources to help make our community a little bit sweeter!

*We hope you enjoy,
Brandy Jackson, Christie Hall and Family*

Ricky Elliott, director of Field Operations, wrote, “This is a heartwarming story. How thoughtful and kind of this family to provide ‘thank you’ bags to our employees. Our local staff are on the front lines of this pandemic response on a daily basis conducting COVID-19 specimen collection clinics. Since March 30, 2020, over 1,500 clinics have been held. I know these bags are very much appreciated by everyone who receives them.”



The Safe Harbor Church in Montgomery hosted a drive-up COVID-19 testing clinic. Shown posing with a few of the goody bags are, left to right, Sarah Douglas, June Grier, Christie Hall and Brandy Jackson.



Others shown with the family are Kennita Marshall and Allyson Hobbs. Each water bottle for essential workers had a thank you card attached.

Northern District Employees Promote Suicide Prevention Awareness



Employees of the Northern District helped bring awareness to suicide prevention program QPR on World Suicide Prevention Day, September 20, 2020, as shown in this collage of public health support.

Meet the Northeastern District Infection Prevention and Control Team

The Northeastern District recently introduced Infection Prevention and Control team members based at the Calhoun County Health Department in Anniston. The team coordinates disease outbreak clinics, provides employee health services and collaborates with community agencies to provide infection prevention outreach and education in the 11 counties of the district. The team offers COVID-19 testing and result reporting, mass vaccination clinics (hepatitis A, influenza, COVID-19) and can assist in promoting and providing health education on emerging diseases and outbreaks. Shown, left to right, are Jennifer Jennings, LPN; IPC Team Supervisor Lindsey Laminack, BSN, RN; Sherry Box, clinic aide; Emily Webb, BSN, RN; Hailee Bonds, LBSW; Darlene Bradford, administrative support assistant III; and Greg Pfeiffer, administrative support assistant II.





Photo credit: Photo courtesy of HDR © 2020 Chris Luker

Visitors touring the lab facility are drawn to this inspirational wall mural. Bureau of Clinical Laboratories Director Dr. Sharon Massingale and staff created the design, and employees voted on which inspirational quotations would be featured.

The new space will also help drive innovation and provide the opportunity for large meetings and in-person communication so to benefit the progression of public health in Alabama. We have staff members that are continuing to support the ICS structure for the department's COVID-19 response, so being in close proximity to the ICS team location has been of great benefit for logistics and planning overall.

As with any move of this magnitude come issues and complications but with the great help of our staff and Facilities Management team, we are adjusting to the somewhat new way of doing business with great strides and progress and look forward to serving the public from our new location.

Jamie Gray, BS, AAS, NRP, Acting Director, Office of Emergency Medical Services

Office of Radiation Control Finds Positives in New Location

The move itself was pretty seamless due to the efforts of staff to work as a team prior to the move. Because we moved into smaller offices, we scanned over 400,000 documents while at the RSA Tower allowing us to downsize the number of filing cabinets at the new Prattville location.

We have staff that continue to provide support to the Center for Emergency Preparedness (CEP) in the ICS structure for the COVID-19 response, so our close proximity with CEP and the Alabama National Guard here in Prattville is beneficial.

We continue to get acclimated to our new offices, including setting up and equipping the State Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center (SRMAC). The new SRMAC is a larger room than we had at the RSA Tower, which will better serve the office in the event of a radiological incident at a nuclear power plant in Alabama.

David A. Turberville, Director, Office of Radiation Control

Alabama Observes National Rural Health Day 2020

Although COVID-19 prevented a group gathering for a photo opportunity with the governor as in past years, Gov. Kay Ivey issued an official proclamation of November 19 as National Rural Health Day 2020 in Alabama.

In the proclamation, the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, Alabama Family Practice Rural Health Board, Alabama Hospital Association, Alabama Primary Health Care Association, Alabama Rural Health Association, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Alabama Rural Health Collaborative stated their pride in recognizing the innovation, quality of care, and dedication of health professionals and volunteers in the state.

In addition, a Calhoun County dental practice was also selected as "Community Star." Sarrell Dental and Eye in Anniston was chosen for this honor "for exemplifying what it is to be a true champion of rural healthcare and for their many contributions in rural communities." The annual "Community Stars" eBook publication honors and gives a personal voice to rural people, providers, advocates and communities across the country. Sarrell Dental and Eye's story appears in the 2020 eBook available on the PowerofRural.org website, the official hub for National Rural Health Day and the Power of Rural movement.

In addition, Liza Nicholson's photo of River St. Roasters, a small coffee shop located in rural Coffeeville, Ala., was selected the winner of the National Rural Health Day 2020 photo contest. The shop pictured here opened in summer 2020, and it is the first of its kind in the town. Residents commented that the shop "has been a pleasant addition to the town and the community members young and old can come by and intimately enjoy their favorite beverage and pastry with family and friends to catch up." A mural of the Jim Folsom bridge is painted on the side of the shop.



This photo of River St. Roasters, a small coffee shop located in rural Coffeeville, Ala., was selected as Alabama's winner of the National Rural Health Day 2020 photo contest.

Office Holiday Trees Decorated with the Unique Hallmarks of the Year 2020



Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support



Bureau of Financial Services



**No supplies were harmed in the making of this Christmas Tree. Only expired and donated supplies were used*

Colbert County Home Health*

COVID-19 Creates Challenges in World and Workplace

During this year "2020" there have been some challenging times in the world and workplace due to COVID-19. The COVID-19 crisis is currently affecting everyone in some form, and ADPH is carrying a heavier burden



in terms of communication. We're all figuring out new ways to make the world move forward. We have many choices of communication which are much faster than mail and new methods of visitation to stay safe on the job such as wearing a mask, as well as social distancing. Effective communication is essential during this difficult time and is essential to managing workplace stress and conflict and to interact well with others. The department has contracted with Behavioral Health Systems (BHS) Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a national company designed to assist employees and their families with work and life issues. Some of the counseling services offered are: Marital/Family, Stress, Grief, and Loss, Financial/Legal, Depression, Emotional Health, Substance Abuse, Relationships, Anxiety and ADHD/ADD. There is no cost to use BHS services. You can call BHS at 205-879-1150 or 800-245-1150 Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Central Time. You can also log onto their website: www.behaviorhealthsystems.com and use the password "DORM." If you have questions, please contact Danita Rose, Employee Relations Officer, in the Office of Human Resources, Employee Relations Section, at (334) 206-9494.

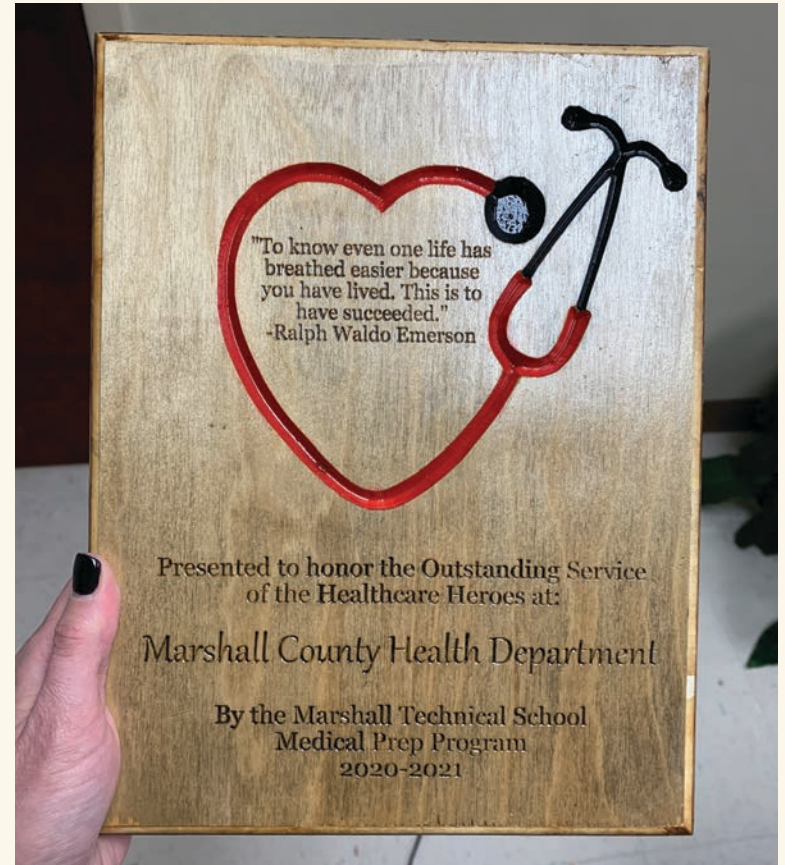
We must all work together to accomplish the mission of the department.

"In many ways, effective communication begins with mutual respect, communication that inspires, encourages others to do their best." (Zig Ziglar)

"We hope you have a safe and relaxing holiday season."
By DANITA ROSE

Students Make Plaque to Honor Marshall County Healthcare Heroes

Thoughtful students in the Medical Prep Program of the Marshall Technical School made this plaque "to honor the outstanding service of the Healthcare Heroes at Marshall County Health Department." Staff members were pleased when the students surprised them with the special presentation on November 18.



Cynthia 'Cyndi' Tereszkievicz, continued from page 14

credential for her profession. She was a Registered Environmental Health Specialist. This was done voluntarily several years ago. I was VERY proud of her accomplishment and she was an EH role model to say the least!

Tim Hatch, MPA, REHS
Incoming Assistant Administrator
East Central District

Cyndi always displayed a positive attitude and cared about the people she worked with each day both inside and outside the office. She was a great employee who displayed a great work ethic and knowledge of her programs. No matter how long since she last saw or spoke with someone, she always had a smile and a kind word.

Corey Kirkland, District Administrator
Southeast District

Workshops Focus on Protecting Young Children - Safe Sleep, Car Safety and Unexplained Pediatric Deaths

The Alabama Child Death Review Program (ACDRS) presented two virtual workshops for professionals with the overarching goal of eliminating preventable child deaths.

Kimberly Gordon, ACDRS Program Manager, said, "Education is the key to prevention and these workshops will provide vital information to professionals that are involved in the efforts to review and prevent unexplained and unexpected deaths of children in Alabama."

An August 27 workshop focused on getting best practice information to parents of young children and ways to address resistance to following safety measures. The speakers discussed the benefits and proper use of car seats, the components of safe sleep practices for babies, and appropriate ways to talk to parents who have lost an infant to sudden and unexplained infant and child death.

The program held a second workshop on September 4. The focus of this workshop was on investigation of those pediatric deaths which remain incompletely understood or entirely unexplained. Unexplained pediatric deaths are special concerns for not only those in the high-risk group of children ages 1 through 4, but in young people ages 14 through 21.



Conducting the September 4 workshop was Dr. Brandi McCleskey, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pathology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Associate Coroner/Medical Examiner at the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office in Birmingham.

The ACDRS was created on September 11, 1997, to review, evaluate and prevent cases of unexpected and unexplained child death. ACDRS's mission is to understand how and why children die in Alabama, in order to prevent other child deaths.

ACDRS, which includes both state and local child death review teams, focuses on prevention through statistical analysis, education, advocacy efforts, and local community involvement.

Neck Fans Help Cool Home Health Employees

Keeping cool is a necessity in the field on summer days, so CARES Act funds were used to purchase personal neck fans for home health employees. Homecare Division Director Dr. Choona Lang calls the fans "a little

piece of equipment that provides great comfort and a reason to smile." Northeastern District home health nurses and aides Cecolia Willis, Casey Thornton, Julia Honeycutt and Kaci Beuckens model their fans.



Cecolia Willis



Casey Thornton



Julia Honeycutt and Kaci Beuckens