

# ALABAMA'S

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

# HEALTH

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## Alabama has fewest infant deaths and teen births on record in 2001

**T**he Alabama Department of Public Health announces that the 567 infant deaths in 2001 was the lowest number ever recorded. Twenty-seven fewer infant deaths occurred in 2001 than in 2000, and infant deaths declined from 3,004 in 1950 to a low of 567 in 2001.

The infant mortality rate for 2001 matched the rate (9.4 per 1,000 live births) for 2000 and was tied for the lowest in the history of the state. In fact, the three-year rate of 9.5 per 1,000 live births was the lowest ever three-year rate in Alabama.

Teen births declined from 9,916 in 2000 to 8,993 in 2001. This was also the least number of births to teenagers in Alabama. In 1960, teens bore 15,608 infants, compared to the 8,993 births in 2001.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "There has been significant progress in lowering the number of infant deaths and in the number of teens having children. Alabamians should be proud of the programs we have implemented to address our traditionally high infant mortality rate."

Especially high infant mortality rates were found for some groups. For example, the infant mortality rate for black infants (15.2 per 1,000 live births) was more than twice as high as the rate for white infants (6.8).

The infant mortality rate was higher for infants of teen mothers (14.1), for mothers who smoked (12.7), and for mothers with less than adequate prenatal care (12.3). Low weight babies, those born at less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces, had an infant mortality rate of 65.5 per 1,000 live births.

Infants born in multiple deliveries died at a rate of 45.3 per 1,000 live births, compared to a rate of 8.1 for infants in single deliveries.

Among the programs which help reduce the infant mortality rate are the following:

- the WIC program (which is designed to provide nutrition education and nutritious food to low income mothers and children),
- Plan *first* (which is a program which helps low income women plan their pregnancies),
- tobacco prevention programs,
- teen pregnancy and unwed pregnancy prevention programs
- programs to encourage mothers to put their infants to sleep on their backs to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS),
- programs to encourage women to take folic acid to prevent birth defects when they become pregnant.

# Artemis Program slated to receive Vision Award of ASTHO

**A**rtemis is the Greek goddess of the hunt and protector of infants during birth. This is an appropriate name for the case management software developed to help with the care of pregnant women with hepatitis B.

The Artemis Program, developed by Brian Wheeler (a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public health advisor assigned to Alabama), is designed for state, county and municipal perinatal hepatitis B programs.

This computer system contains information relating to the follow-up and care of carrier women during pregnancy, as well as that of their household and sexual contacts. It also monitors the status and care of the infant following delivery to ensure that the proper biologicals are administered at birth as well as at the appropriate times in infancy and that post-vaccination blood testing is accomplished.

The system has been used in Alabama since 1999 and has proven effective. Valerie Cochran, RN, BSN, director of the Policy, Epidemiology and Education Branch of the Immunization Division, said the system provides an efficient method to coordinate the care of a large number of infants and contacts of patients who have chronic hepatitis B and provides a method to identify infants of chronically infected women who have had no prenatal

care.

In a typical year, the two state coordinators identify and case-manage 100 patients, so Artemis is necessary to keep track of the large amount of information needed to prevent the transmission of hepatitis B from mother to infant.

The Immunization Division, Alabama Department of Public Health, has made this computer program available to all perinatal hepatitis B programs in the United States.

Winkler Sims, director of the Immunization Division, will receive this first place, \$5,000 award on behalf of the program at the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials meeting in Nashville, Tenn., this month.

## 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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Informational materials in alternative formats will be made available upon request..

# Alabama environmentalists' investigation results in \$10,000 - \$15,000 fines for processors

An investigation that began in 1998 and was followed by a long court process culminated in the prosecution and sentencing in federal court of two Alabama blue crab processors and one Louisiana crab hauler.

Environmentalists Chad Kent and Jeff McCool of the Bureau of Environmental Services' Seafood Branch, under the direction of Branch Director Dr. Lewis Byrd, successfully coordinated the joint investigation with Special Agent Robert J. West of the the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Office of Criminal Investigation.

All three defendants pled guilty to fraud in processing crab meat that had been mixed with "inferior" crab meat that was prepared, packed or stored under insanitary conditions. The United States Attorney charged the crab meat was adulterated in that it was processed under conditions in which it may have become contaminated with filth, or may have been rendered injurious to health.

The defendants were also charged with selling "misbranded" crab meat as defined in the United States Code. The labeling of the crab meat was false and misleading because it implied that the crab meat was shipped in boxes as "fresh seafood" and the smaller, individual containers in the boxes were labeled as "premium crab meat." The crab meat that was being mixed with the fresh crab meat had in fact been produced in foreign countries or from unpermitted, insanitary "backyard" processors in Louisiana.

In May of 2000, the Louisiana crab hauler was sentenced to two years' probation and fined \$10,000. The probation restrictions were that he could not in any way be involved in the commercial handling of processed seafood or crabs.

The first Alabama blue crab processor was sentenced in November of 2001 to two years' supervised probation and fined \$15,000. In April 2002, the second Alabama blue crab processor was fined \$15,000 and sentenced to two years' probation in which he is not allowed to be involved in the processing or sale of crab meat. This includes the processor personally or any business belonging to or operated by him.

"The FDA Office of Criminal Investigation contacted me several times during the course of this investigation to commend Jeff and Chad for their work," said Pres Allinder, director of the Bureau of Environmental Services. "They put in a lot of hours to get this resolved and deserve congratulations for gathering the initial

information and following it through to the court dates."

The Seafood Branch received the original complaint on March 4, 1998, that two blue crab processing shops, with food processing permits issued by the Seafood Branch, were mixing "backyard" or "bootleg" crab meat and foreign crab meat with fresh crab meat. They were packing it in containers labeled as "fresh" crab meat. Dr. Byrd assigned the two environmentalists to investigate the complaint against the two shops.

As a result of their investigation, the Seafood Branch staff believed they had discovered information linking the Alabama crab shops to interstate shipments of suspect crabmeat and contacted the Mobile Resident Post of the Food and Drug Administration. The Mobile FDA office then contacted the FDA's Office of Criminal Investigation. The office reviewed the preliminary information obtained by Kent and McCool and began preparations for a more extensive investigation.

Joint investigations of crab shops during day and nighttime working hours, interviews and statements with persons associated with the operations were also conducted. The information was presented to the Grand Jury and indictments were issued.

At the request of the FDA Office of Criminal Investigation, the branch staff accompanied Louisiana wildlife officers in conducting interviews at one of the "backyard" crab plants that was supplying crab meat to two suspect Alabama crab processors.

Dr. Lewis Byrd, director of the Seafood Branch, said, "We are proud that we are dealing with a group of processors where the vast majority are honest and do all they can to present a safe product meeting all legal standards. But, for any processor having thoughts about not doing so, we hope fines in the \$10,000 to \$15,000 range, along with being barred from working in the industry, gets their attention."

"I can't say enough good things about Jeff and Chad's work," he added.

## Big vans roll easily

**D**o you ride in a 15-passenger van on your way to the job site? If so, you'd better buckle your seatbelt. Do you belong to a community, sports or church organization which uses such a van? Then you need to be aware of the serious hazards of rollover crashes.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration warns the risk of a rollover crash is increased greatly when 10 or more people ride in a 15-passenger van. The increased risk occurs because passenger weight raises the vehicle's center of gravity and causes it to shift toward the rear. The change in center of gravity means the van is more difficult to handle in an emergency and more likely to roll.

NHTSA found that more than 90 percent of rollovers occur after the driver has lost control of the vehicle and run off the road. Most of these crashes do not involve another vehicle.

Three situations typically lead to rollover in a 15-passenger van:

- The van goes off a rural road, striking a ditch or embankment or running into a soft surface.
- A fatigued driver dozes off or loses control because of high speed. When tires contact grass or dirt on the median or shoulder, they sink and the vehicle rolls.
- The driver panics and overcorrects in an emergency, sending a wheel off the pavement. The van then slides sideways and rolls.

During the last 10 years, 80 percent of people killed in rollover crashes in 15-passenger vans were not wearing their seatbelts. The simple act of buckling a seatbelt dramatically reduces the risk of being killed or seriously injured in a rollover crash. Many of those who die in rollover crashes are thrown partly or completely from the vehicle, then strike an outside object at high speed or are crushed by the vehicle.

These measures can help prevent van rollover crashes:

- Avoid conditions leading to loss of vehicle control

such as speeding or driving under the influence of drugs, alcohol or fatigue.

- Drive cautiously on rural roads, being prepared for curves and narrow sections.
- Know what to do if the wheels drop off the pavement—gradually reducing speed and gently steering back onto the roadway when it is safe to do so.
- Maintain tires properly, with good tread and the right inflation.
- Allow more space for changing lanes and use side mirrors to see.
- Avoid sudden steering moves.
- Allow extra breaking time.
- Use side mirrors.

The number of passengers makes a difference too. A 15-passenger van should not be carrying more than 15 occupants. When the vehicle is not full, passengers should sit in seats located in front of the rear axle.

Whether they are used to haul workers to a remote mine site or children to a summer camp, these vans should be operated only by experienced, competent and careful drivers. And everyone has to buckle up.

*Reprinted from Safety Smart.*

### Injury News

Published By

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# Landmark state plan addresses violence against women

**V**iolence against women is a significant public health problem and criminal justice concern which has an important impact upon our communities. Each year there are more than 1,000 rapes and 20,000 cases of domestic violence reported to the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center, yet only an estimated 16 to 20 percent of these violent incidents are ever reported.

For the first time, a comprehensive state plan to address violence against women has been formulated by the Council of Violence Against Women. This plan was developed by the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Alabama Coalition Against Rape with support from the Alabama Department of Public Health, and collaboration with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Governor's Office.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "Today I would like to announce, along with Judge Fry and John Hall, the results of our partnership, a major step in our ongoing efforts to address this issue: A State Plan to Address Violence Against Women."

Judge Jimmy Fry, deputy director of ADECA, said, "We are pleased that Alabama is one of 10 states selected to develop a unified state plan to address violence against women. The process of developing it was very inclusive, and its recommendations represent a consensus of what we want to do."

John Hall, chair of the Council on Violence Against Women, said, "Work groups from the courts, law enforcement, health officials and of boards and staffs have studied various issues, policies and statistics concerning violence in Alabama. More than 200 creative proposals have been reviewed, and all of them have been adopted."

This plan outlines a series of recommendations regarding the roles and responsibilities of every aspect of our society including law enforcement, the judicial system, health care providers, victim service agencies, and communities. These systems are increasingly involved in combating violence against women.

The Council on Violence Against Women developed the recommendations. Its membership is reflective of state and local entities responding to or impacted by violence against women including law enforcement officers, prosecutors, physicians and others.

Many work group recommendations incorporated in



Nancy Wright, health department representative on the Council, and Carol Gundlach, executive director of the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence, attended the unveiling of the plan.

the plan were echoed by other committees, such as the need for training in several areas related to domestic and sexual violence.

**Judicial** recommendations include designation of case files, allowing victim advocates in the court system, utilizing and enforcing protection orders and conditions of release, developing safety plans for courthouses, developing protocols by local courts and making appropriate referrals to certified intervention programs.

**Prosecution** recommendations are similar to the judicial recommendations and include providing victims with information regarding the status of the case and consulting with victims regarding case decisions, encouraging the use of evidence-based prosecution techniques, holding perpetrators accountable and enhancing victim safety.

**Law enforcement** recommendations include developing history files on chronically violent defendants, designating domestic violence calls as high priority, encouraging collection of all relevant evidence to increase usage of evidence-based prosecution, interviewing all parties separately and providing relevant information to victims.

**Health care** recommendations include developing a policy regarding domestic violence screening of patients, developing protocols for appropriate response to domestic and sexual violence cases, providing information regarding

*Violence.....continued on page 6*

# Dallas County Health Department hosts eye/diabetes screening

Free eye screenings were held at the Dallas County Health Department in Selma on July 23-25 to test the public for visual acuity, glaucoma, blood pressure and diabetes. The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Lions Club International Foundation and the Dallas County Health Department were the sponsors of this event.

The screenings were held in the Lions' mobile vision screening bus and at the health department.

The UAB Vision Science Research Center has begun the pilot phase of an extensive Black Belt rural screening and research program aimed at assessing the prevalence and progression of eye disease due to glaucoma. Three hundred thirty-five citizens of Dallas County took advantage of these screenings and they participated in six

tests each.

During these screenings they found many persons' blood sugar levels were elevated. One individual with a level over 500 was sent to the emergency room at Vaughan Regional Medical Center. A few persons were found to have blood sugar levels over 300. The indigent patients were referred to the Lions Club for glasses and other treatments.

Ashvin Parikh, administrator for Dallas County, said, "This is a needed service here and people took advantage of the screening. We are pleased the Lions Club will provide glasses to indigent patients and try to find funding for treatment of the patients who were found to have diabetes and glaucoma."

## Retirees

Retiring effective Aug. 1 were the following public health employees:

- Judy McAfee* - Winston County Health Department
- Kenneth Sharpless* - Tallapoosa County Health Department
- Maxie Stephens* - Elmore County Health Department
- Peggy Wright* - Lamar County Health Department

Retiring July 1 was *Judith Fields* - Health Statistics

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domestic and sexual violence in curricula used by medical educational institutions, and providing sexual response teams in as many communities as possible.

Recommendations of the **Prevention and Intervention Response to Youth Intimate Violence** included developing anti-violence media campaigns targeting youth, providing information to schools regarding resources for victims, providing training for university personnel on domestic and sexual violence, and developing policies for appropriate responses to sexual and domestic violence on college campuses.

The Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence

recommends expanding services for victims of domestic and sexual violence, and developing policies regarding appropriate response to victims.

Coordinated Community Response recommendations include developing domestic violence task forces in every county and collaboration with various agencies.

# Hope After Tragedy: Mobile woman's plight stirs a community into action and saves another woman's life

**A** middle-aged woman, financially unable to seek medical care, knew she was suffering from some kind of horrible disease, but she didn't know where to turn. One day she was watching television and saw a commercial about the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.

As a result she went to the Mobile County Health Department to seek help. The woman told the health department's staff that she was scared and didn't have any money. She asked if she was going to die, as the nurses resisted the urge to cry. Upon removal of her clothing it was obvious to all present that this pleasant yet timid woman's condition had progressed to an advanced stage of breast cancer with extensive involvement of her lymph nodes. Her entire arm was swollen twice the size of normal.

## Intervention

The physician and staff of the health department scheduled her an appointment with a local surgeon immediately, as time was of the essence. Within the following hour, the surgeon examined her and immediately sent her to an oncologist for further analysis. The patient was admitted to a local hospital at once where she was given chemotherapy treatment.

The next day, one of the nurses received a phone call from the patient. She thanked the health department for their kindness and stated that she needed some help in filling out the forms for Medicaid coverage. After work the nurse stopped by the patient's house to assist her. Upon entering she discovered that the woman had neither hot water nor air conditioning.

After several phone calls, the local power company agreed to donate a hot water heater and air conditioning window unit if the patient could find someone to rewire her house. Donations began to grow as health department employees and community people began to open their hearts and wallets. The patient's house was soon rewired, and the hot water heater and air conditioner were installed.

After several weeks of chemotherapy, the surgeon decided to perform a double mastectomy. Further tests revealed that the cancer had spread to her bones and lungs. Although the patient's outcome is uncertain at this time, her comfort has been greatly enhanced since she first walked through the doors of the health department. The ABCCEDP and Medicaid have paid for her medical costs, enabled her to purchase pain medication, and when the

time comes, will pay for her to receive care at a hospice facility.

## Impact

As a result of this case the patient's sister came forward for a routine breast exam, and a lump was discovered in one of her breasts. She was sent to have a biopsy and the lump was found to be malignant. The surgeon was able to perform a lumpectomy and found no signs of invasive cancer.

In general, as a result of the ABCCEDP being promoted in the public through various measures such as television and radio advertisements, health fairs, partnerships, community groups and organizations, life saving tests have been made available to thousands of women who would most likely not had them otherwise. In this case specifically, two important things occurred.

First, the response from health department employees and the community was overwhelmingly great. They showed tremendous spirit and effort as they worked to have the patient's house rewired. The health department employees knew she faced a tough road ahead especially because of her cancer, and the community people just knew that someone was in need of help and offered their assistance. Second, her diagnosis prompted her sister to go for screening also. If it had not been for the ABCCEDP, she probably would not have been able to afford screening just as her sister had not. She learned through her sister that resources were available to help her, and in turn, her life has been saved. Although the first patient's life may not be saved, she can be at peace knowing that the ABCCEDP was there to help her and countless others. Therefore, there is still hope after tragedy: hope in living as comfortably as possible, hope in bringing others together for a common cause, and hope in saving other women's lives.

*By SANDY EVANS, RN, BSN*

# Nutrition and physical activity stressed at Montgomery Community Garden

The Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit of the Office of Professional and Support Services is involved in many community activities, among them is the Montgomery Community Garden.

The Alabama Department of Public Health, along with the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, is working with Albert Harris of the Alabama Coalition Against Hunger to provide not only food, but nutrition and physical activity education to those in need through community gardening.

Nutritionist Molly Pettyjohn works with the program. She pointed out that the department's involvement is mainly to make sure participants are provided accurate printed materials on food safety and the health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables. Information is also made available on physical activity from a gardening standpoint.

The gardeners plant, tend and gather vegetables and distribute them to the Salvation Army, a local soup kitchen and a senior site where those in need are encouraged to take the vegetables home.

For more information contact Molly Pettyjohn at

(334) 206-5646 or Albert Harris at (334) 262-0359.



Volunteers pick vegetables from the community garden.

# Clay County holds Teen/Young Adult Health Fair

Teen pregnancy awareness and Plan *first* insurance opportunities were the goals of the first annual Teen/Young Adult Health Fair held Aug. 17 in Clay County. The event also was intended to provide education and awareness of all local health department services.

Health department personnel invited teens, parents,

young adults and other interested persons to attend the event. Refreshments were served, door prizes were given, and Tom Robertson, area VI HIV coordinator, was the guest speaker. Health department staff were available to answer questions and hand out pamphlets regarding various programs. The celebration was well received.

# Children across the state to walk for safety and health on Oct. 2

Walking or biking to school is one way children can increase their activity levels. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Kids Walk-To-School Program seeks to increase opportunities for physical activity by encouraging children to walk and bicycle to school in groups accompanied by adults.

Alabama Walk to School Day is Oct. 2, 2002. In addition to encouraging physical activity, this program also encourages communities to build coalitions to create an environment that is supportive of safe walking and bicycling to school.

• Eighty-five percent of children's trips to school are

made by car or school bus, and only 13 percent of all trips to school are made by walking or bicycling (HealthStyles Survey, 1999 supported by the CDC.)

• Children's dependence on their parents and other adults to drive them to and from school represents a missed opportunity for physical activity, increases traffic congestion, and threatens the safety and quality of the environment in which we live. Long distances from school and traffic danger represent the two most important barriers.

• Nationwide 30 percent of youth do not participate in regular vigorous physical activity, and as age increases

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# Walking competition participants celebrate New Orleans style

The lyrics tell, "I'm walkin' to New Orleans, walkin' to New Orleans" and the participants in the Food and Fitness program for employees in Montgomery did just that. Eleven teams of at least five members each walked the equivalent of the distance in miles from Montgomery to New Orleans, La.

Walking teams recorded the actual distances they trekked in areas around the RSA Tower or participated in sports such as bicycling or swimming. The winning team was the "Sorry Bunch of Losers," which met 142 percent of its goal and walked 440 miles. Team members are Captain Cheryl Achtemeier, Deborah Beard, Daytha Grier, Brenda Ryals and Jay Taylor. At the Lab in Montgomery team number 1 met 129 percent of its goal, meaning they walked 322 miles. They had Art Elmore, Jodi Jackson, Randy Sexton and Gayla Strickland as members.

Creole/cajun cooking was the order of the day for a special potluck luncheon celebration. General Counsel John Wible wore his court jester headgear to the fun-filled special event. Miriam Gaines, director of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit, also shared some delicious lowfat New Orleans recipes with program participants.

A recent communique from Cheryl Achtemeier of the winning team urged her crew on with the following, "Looks like we're all back in for the next trip! Daytha has



Debra Beard and Daytha Grier.

already set her goals high and says we'll be there, go down Mexico way, and be back before the others get out of the starting blocks good! Find those pedometers and get them ready. We're on our way! Same team as before. Let's lose a little more!"

Who knows, before long the teams may make it to their next destination in San Antonio, with their ultimate goal of walking cross country to California.

Food and Fitness is a voluntary program to learn healthy eating and physical activity lifestyles.

## Commendations

Health department employees who are listed here have received letters of commendation recently. To recognize other employees, please send letters through your supervisors or the state health officer to *Alabama's Health*.

**Tralise Dennis**  
Center for Health Statistics

from Jan Morton  
Mobile, Ala.

**Bill Duke**  
Center for Health Statistics

from Robert White  
Address unlisted

**Mabel Jordan**  
Center for Health Statistics

from Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Williams  
Silver Spring, Mary.

**Kay Mitchell**  
Public Health Area 1

from Arrol Sheehan  
Montgomery, Ala.

**Theresa Mulkey**  
Center for Health Statistics

from Melanie and Don Roths  
India  
Libby Schrum  
Birmingham, Ala.

**Joann B. Robinson**  
Center for Health Statistics

from Sharlotte Pearson  
Thousand Oaks, Calif.

**Tom Robertson**  
Public Health Area VI

from Barbara Bresler Sokol  
Alexander City, Ala.

# Etowah Home Health voted “Best” in Reader’s Choice 2002

**E**towah County Home Health was voted “Best” in three categories in Reader’s Choice 2002, an annual advertising supplement to the local daily newspaper. Readers are asked to send in ballots listing their favorites in various categories and the Etowah County agency and staff came out on top.

**Etowah County Home Health** was voted first place as “Best Home Health Agency,” **Carolyn Robertson, R.N.**, home health clinic supervisor, was named second place for “Best Nurse” and Etowah County Home Health supervisor **Angie Cobb, R.N.**, was voted third place for “Best Boss.”

Co-workers stated, “This is an opportunity to say that we are very proud of the great nurses we have at Etowah County Home Health; and appreciate the hard work they do every day; and their dedication to providing quality care to all our patients. Excellent patient care is their priority, and we appreciate them!”



Readers Choice 2002 gave its top honors to Etowah County Health Department Home Health as “Best Home Health Agency.” Employees are shown here following the announcement.



Angie Cobb (left) and Carolyn Roberson were recognized by Readers’Choice 2002. Ms. Cobb received third place honors as “Best Boss” and Ms. Roberson was awarded second place mention as “Best Nurse.”

## 15th Annual Alabama AIDS Symposium to be held in Point Clear

**O**n Sept. 26-27 the 15th Annual Alabama AIDS Symposium will be held at the Grand Hotel Marriott in Point Clear. The theme for the 2002 conference is “Prevention and Treatment: Hope For Today, Solutions for Tomorrow.” The symposium is sponsored by the Alabama Department of Public Health in collaboration with numerous co-sponsors.

“The conference brings together health care providers, persons living with HIV, care givers and other service providers for an annual update on current medical treatments and community prevention strategies being implemented in the ongoing war against HIV infection” said Brenda Cummings, HIV/AIDS Symposium Coordinator at the HIV/AIDS Division of Prevention and Control, Alabama Department of Public Health.

The conference will feature a variety of workshops and speakers on different topics related to HIV infection. On

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levels of physical activity decline. Nearly 40 percent of Alabama youth do not participate in regular moderate or vigorous physical activity. (2001 YRBS)

- Young people aged 2-18 years spend an average of four hours a day watching television.
- Since 1980 the prevalence of childhood overweight has doubled. Childhood physical activity helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints. It helps control weight, build lean muscle and reduce fat. It prevents or delays the development of high blood pressure, reduces feelings of depression and anxiety, and is related to higher levels of self-esteem.

National Walk Our Children To School Day was established in 1997 by the Partnership for a Walkable America, a national alliance of public and private organizations committed to making walking safer, easier and more enjoyable. The Alabama Walk campaign established in Alabama in 1999 consists of an alliance of Alabama SAFEKIDS, Alabama Department of Transportation, Education, Public Health, Public Safety, Economic and Community Affairs, sponsors, local boards of education and over 120 neighborhood schools.

From a modest beginning in 1999 with two cities participating (Montgomery and Birmingham) the Alabama

Walk has grown to 21 cities, 120 schools, with 27,000 students, parents and community leaders participating in the October 2001 event. The Alabama Walk encourages adults and children to walk to school together, spending healthy, active time together, learning safe walking behaviors, and safe routes to school, and specific steps to create more walkable communities while identifying the need for crosswalks, sidewalks, crossing guards, and traffic safety devices.

The Walking School Bus is a healthy, fun and safe alternative for children in urban areas within walking distance of their school. This year Alabama Walk will introduce the Walking School Bus at an elementary school in Montgomery. Committed parents, grandparents and neighbors in the community enjoy 30 minutes of recommended daily physical activity while leading the children in a “walking school bus” to and from school every day.

For more information contact Anita Sanford, Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit, Office of Professional and Support Services, (334) 206-5656, [asanford@adph.state.al.us](mailto:asanford@adph.state.al.us).

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Sept. 26, Dr. Glodys St. Phard of the Alabama Department of Corrections will present “HIV/AIDS: International/ International/ National, Social and Cultural Perspectives,” followed by Dr. Jorge Herrera, Professor of Medicine at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, who will present “HIV and Hepatitis C.” Both presentations will be broadcast live via satellite from the conference site.

On Sept. 27, the opening plenary session will feature author and HIV educator J.L. King, whose presentation is titled “No More Secrets: Raising Up From the Down Low.” This workshop will explore King’s observations and experiences with African American males who live dual sexual lives. King is currently working with ABC’s 20/20 News Magazine to produce a segment on the same topic.

In addition to these presentations, the symposium will include other exciting workshops and speakers on topics such as “Life Challenges with HIV,” “HIV/AIDS Treatment Update,” “What’s The Secret About Victoria’s

Secret?,” “How To Manage Your Energy,” and “HIV/AIDS School Requirements And Methods of Enhancing Coordinated School Health.”

The conference pre-registration fee is \$99 prior to Sept. 15. After Sept. 15 registration is \$129. For more information contact Brenda Cummings at 334-206-5364, or [bcummings@adph.state.al.us](mailto:bcummings@adph.state.al.us), or visit the Alabama Department of Public Health Web site at [www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org).

*By TAKENYA STOKES*

# Calendar of Events



**September 17**

“Hope for Health: Creating and Enhancing Partnerships Between Public Health and Education,” 12 noon-2 p.m. For more information contact Stacey Tompkins, (703) 237-9625.



**September 19**

ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m. For more information contact Jim McVay, Dr.P.A., (334) 206-5600.

**September 25-27**

15th Annual WIC Training Conference, “Makin’ Waves,” Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach. For more information contact Michele Jones, WIC Conference Coordinator, (334) 206-5043.



**September 26**

15th Annual Alabama AIDS Symposium - “HIV/AIDS: Social and Cultural Perspectives, International/National and HIV and Hepatitis C,” 10-11:30 a.m. For more information contact Brenda Cummings, (334) 206-5364.



**September 27**

15th Annual Alabama AIDS Symposium, “No More Secrets: Raising Up From the Down Low,” 10:15-11:30 a.m. For more information contact Brenda Cummings, 334-206-5364, or Tony Thompson, [gtonythompson@aol.com](mailto:gtonythompson@aol.com) or visit [www.alaaidssym.org](http://www.alaaidssym.org).



**October 2**

“Healthy Caregivers Helping Patients,” Bessie Brooks Recognition Program, Home Health Aide and Home Attendant Continuing Education. For more information contact Brenda Elliott, (334) 347-2664, extension 402.



**October 9**

Safe Haven Training, 10 a.m.-12 noon For more information contact Charlena Freeman, (334) 206-2973.



**October 10**

Home Care Software Update, Home Health Training Continuing Education, 8-10 a.m. For more information contact Brenda Elliott, (334) 347-2664, extension 402.



**October 16**

“Implementing Successful School-based Physical Activity, Nutrition and Tobacco (PANT) Prevention Programs,” Public Health Staff Development, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Debbie Thomasson, (334) 206-5655.