

# Alabama's health

*A publication of the Alabama Department of Public Health*

## Office of Radiation Control Hosts Full-Scale National Exercise

Responding to an emergency in a coordinated manner is vital to protect the public's health and safety. The National Nuclear Security Administration holds an exercise every two years somewhere in the nation to test the activation of various emergency operations centers at the county and state levels and to assess how federal field monitoring teams work with local and state teams.

At the suggestion and with the support of the late Michael Cash, who directed the Office of Radiation Control's Environmental Monitoring and Emergency Planning Section, Alabama was selected to host the full-scale exercise. The five-day exercise involved more than 350 participants, many of whom came from distant locations such as Nevada and Washington, D.C.

NNSA spokesman Kevin Rohrer said, "We put the call out to various states and asked who might be interested in hosting the exercise. The state of Alabama put in a compelling case and the location allowed us to integrate multiple agencies in three different states."

The full-scale exercise in the Dothan area, named Southern Crossing, involved federal

radiological response teams from the states of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and numerous other local and federal agencies in a simulated transportation radiological incident Aug. 14-18. In preparation for the event, Kirk Whatley, director of the Office of Radiation Control, received a visit from Rear Admiral (Retired) Joseph Krol, associate administrator, Office of Emergency Operations, NNSA, to discuss the upcoming event.

The exercise began with a simulated traffic accident causing an explosion, killing

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# Jim Alosi receives 2006 James H. Baker 'Exemplar Award'

**A**rea Tuberculosis Control Manager Jim Alosi led the Birmingham area through the largest multi-drug resistant tuberculosis outbreak ever experienced in the state. For these and other accomplishments, he was chosen recipient of the 2006 James H. Baker "Exemplar Award."

"For over 40 years, citizens and communities threatened by TB could count on a vigorous public health response... and more often than not, Jim Baker was

the first man on the scene," Dr. Charles Woernle, assistant state health officer for disease control prevention, said.

"Now, in 2006 we recognize another member of the TB staff who has carried on in that tradition. Jim Alosi, Area TB Manager in Jefferson County, has led his program through some very difficult situations—including the largest MDR-TB outbreak ever seen in our state."

Alosi joined the Jefferson County Department of Health in 1978, and worked in the Environmental Health section until 1988 when he accepted the challenge to assist disease control in battling sexually transmitted diseases. Two years later, Jim was promoted to supervisor in the HIV section.

"Jim has said that he will always be proud of his involvement with HIV and remembered those days early in the epidemic when only a few stepped forward," Dr. Woernle said. "At that time there were no antiviral drugs, and little to offer those who

were infected except education, counseling and compassion."

Then nearly 10 years later, in 1999, Alosi agreed to tackle another disease of public health significance. "Although TB is an older, long-recognized foe, it has found new victims among the immunocompromised. His experience with HIV has served him well in TB, where he was again promoted, as manager of the area-wide program."

Charlotte Denton, director of the Division of Tuberculosis Control, said, "Jim continues to serve in this capacity and we are pleased to note that he is mentoring younger staff, helping them prepare for public health challenges—both old and new."

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, made the presentation July 31 during a ceremony in the Executive Board Room of the RSA Tower, Montgomery. The award was established in 2004 when Dr. Williamson recognized Jim Baker for 40 years of public service and professional excellence. The intent of the award is to foster excellence in public health by the annual nomination and selection of a TB Control staff member who best reflects the "can do" attitude for which Baker is known. Retiree Jim Baker was on hand for the award presentation.



*Area TB Control Manager Jim Alosi is shown with Charlotte Denton, director of the Division of TB Control, after he was presented the award.*

## 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

# CDC Awards Alabama's SNS with Green Status

Alabama joins eight other states in having received "green status" for its level of preparedness to receive the Strategic National Stockpile program, known as SNS. SNS, a federal program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, helps state governments establish prepositioned caches of medicines and supplies that can be shipped quickly in the event of a large-scale public health emergency.

"Reaching this status took a team, and it will take a team to continue Alabama's success in the SNS program," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, about the arduous process required to meet the upgraded status. "This achievement is a part of our continuing efforts to enhance our ability to respond in the event of a public health emergency."

A written report from CDC praised the clarity of Alabama's plan and the utilization of the Incident Command System structure with integration of SNS functions. Public health staff train employees and volunteers at least twice per year. Training has been provided in the cities of Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile and Montgomery and at the Poarch Creek Indian Reservation.

The CDC report stated, "The Alabama Department of Public Health has developed an outstanding specific SNS preparedness plan that is incorporated into the overall state emergency response plan."

The SNS has large quantities of medicine and medical supplies to protect the American public if there is a public health emergency such as a terrorist attack, a flu outbreak, or a hurricane or an earthquake severe

enough to cause local and state supplies to be exhausted. Medicinal supplies and pharmaceuticals will be delivered to any state in the U.S. within 12 hours. Each state has plans to receive and distribute SNS products to local communities as quickly as possible.

Dena Donovan, SNS coordinator of the health department's Bureau of Professional and Support Services, said, "Our emergency preparedness teams and emergency management agencies have done an excellent job in dispersing SNS information at the local level. Supplies have been purchased and are in place throughout the state in order to respond quickly to an event involving the SNS. This isn't a one-person show; the localities, including city and county emergency planners, have shown they are able to carry it out."

An act of terrorism or a large-scale natural disaster targeting the U.S. civilian population will require rapid access to large quantities of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies. Such quantities might not be readily available unless special stockpiles were created. No one can anticipate exactly where a natural disaster or terrorist will strike and few state or local governments have the resources to create sufficient stockpiles on their own. Therefore, a national stockpile was created as a resource for all.

The SNS program works with governmental and non-governmental partners to upgrade the nation's public health capacity to respond to a national emergency. Critical to the success of this initiative is ensuring capacity is developed at federal, state and local levels to receive, stage and

dispense SNS assets.

The SNS is a national repository of antibiotics, chemical antidotes, antitoxins, life-support medications, IV administration, airway maintenance supplies, and medical/surgical items. The SNS is designed to supplement and re-supply state and local public health agencies in the event of a national emergency anywhere and at any time within the U.S. or its territories.

The SNS Program is part of a nationwide preparedness training and education program for state and local health care providers, first responders, and governments. This training not only explains the SNS Program's mission and operations, it alerts state and local emergency response officials to the important issues they must plan for in order to receive, secure and distribute SNS assets.

CDC grades states' preparedness using red, amber and green ratings. Green is the highest grade that can be achieved. Other states that have been awarded this high status include Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Mississippi, New York, Tennessee and Virginia.



*Dena Donovan coordinates the program to receive, stage and dispense SNS assets.*



## Less Invasive Prostate Cancer Surgery Offers New Option

Men in Alabama who find they have prostate cancer have a new option thanks to a surgical advancement which allows complex surgeries to be performed with the aid of a robot. The daVinci Robot brings cutting edge technology using fine computer-controlled movements so that there can be minimally invasive prostate surgery which protects delicate nerves that control bladder and sexual function. Prostatectomy, or removal of the prostate gland, is the most effective way to combat the disease.

Dr. Edward Bugg, surgeon with Urology Centers of Alabama in Homewood, is among the surgeons using this technique for prostate cancer. Since 2002 he and other doctors in his practice have performed well over 1,000 robotic laparoscopic surgeries.

With the state-of-the-art daVinci system, surgeons use a three-dimensional computer vision system to manipulate robotic arms. These robotic arms hold special surgical instruments that are inserted in the

abdomen through small incisions.

A laparoscope, a lighted telescope, is inserted through one incision and then connected to the computer monitor that will allow the surgeon to enter the body.

The three-dimensional view helps the surgeon easily find the nerves and muscles around the prostate. The robotic arms can rotate a full 360 degrees, allowing the surgeon to manipulate surgical instruments with flexibility.

As with all types of surgeries, complications can occur. Advantages of this type of surgery include the following:

- rarely is there a need for a blood transfusion
- considerably less pain after surgery
- shorter recovery period
- typical hospital stay of less than 24 hours

One in every six men will get prostate cancer some time in his life, and its incidence is greater than that of breast cancer.

The National Prostate Cancer Coalition recently graded Alabama an "F" for its mortality rate and for the percentage of men screened each year.

Dr. Bugg said, "So many men believe their lives are over when they get a prostate cancer diagnosis, and they postpone treatment. The key is to have screening done at an early age where there are good options available to minimize the downside and to keep them up to speed on the latest minimally invasive treatments."

When prostate cancer is in its early stages there are no noticeable symptoms. In more advanced stages symptoms may include difficult or frequent urination, blood in the urine or bone pain.

Every man age 50 or older should be screened annually. African American men or those with a family history of the disease should start being screened at age 40 or 45.

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## Compliance Checks Help Reduce the Supply of Tobacco to Youth

The Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board's Law Enforcement Division, in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Public Health, sent underage buyers into stores throughout several cities during August to conduct compliance checks. The purpose was to determine whether store clerks and owners were selling cigarettes or other tobacco products to youth under age 19.

Barry Riddle, the Youth Tobacco Use Prevention and Control director within

the Tobacco Prevention Division, was pleased with the results. "Store clerks, owners and the community at large are concerned about youth using tobacco. Local communities are making great strides to reduce demand for tobacco products by educating youth on the dangers of tobacco use and educating the general public on exposure to secondhand smoke. But we also need to reduce the supply to underage youth," Riddle states.

"To have a positive impact on youth access

to tobacco, more than 90 percent of stores checked need to be in compliance with the law prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to persons under age 19."

Capt. Phillip Calvert, with ABC Enforcement, states, "More checks are planned and we will definitely be coming back to those stores that sold tobacco products to a minor." Upon conviction, violations for selling to a minor range from \$200 for the

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# Widespread Participation encouraged for State Combined Campaign



*Dr. Donald Williamson, State Health Officer, at center, addressed key workers at a training session prior to the campaign kickoff.*

**G**reater participation among department employees is a goal of the 2006 State Combined Campaign. A simple calculation reveals that if each employee just donated \$1.25 per month this annual campaign would meet its goal.

The department's goal for this year's SCC is two-fold: 100 percent participation among public health employees and a total of \$37,210 in donations.

"As a group, we are extremely fortunate," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer at the key worker training session for RSA Tower and State Laboratory employees on Aug. 31. "For most of us, this campaign provides an opportunity to show how much we care about the people we serve. This is like an insurance policy for all of us."

The Statewide Combined Campaign officially kicked off Sept. 13 and continues into December, however, SCC Coordinator Reginald Strickland is hopeful that employees will make their decisions and complete their payroll deduction pledge cards as soon as possible so that the campaign will be completed early. He stated, "This is your opportunity to contribute conveniently and efficiently to support worthwhile charities of your choice."

The purpose of this annual campaign is to raise funds for numerous local, state and global charities. The State Combined Campaign is the only authorized payroll deduction charitable fundraising effort for state employees. This feature allows state employees to contribute funds via payroll deduction over a 12-month period, starting in January. Many employees find this method of giving allows them to give more, but feel it less. This campaign also enables employees to give conveniently to several charities at once by designating their gift.

Charities apply to be included in the campaign each year. Local boards review the applications to ensure the organizations are qualified human health, welfare and human care service charities recognized by the Internal Revenue Service under 26U.S.C.501(c)(3). Agencies are accountable and must meet rigid standards.

Area and county health departments and central office bureaus have designated keyworkers who have disseminated campaign materials to every employee and will be planning special campaign events over the coming weeks.

For more information you may also contact Reginald Strickland at the Center for Health Statistics at 334-206-5426.

## *Less Invasive Prostate Cancer Surgery, continued from page 4...*

Screening for prostate cancer involves a two-pronged approach: a digital rectal examination and sometimes a simple blood test called a PSA that measures the level of protein called prostate-specific antigen in the blood. Normally PSA is found in the blood at very low levels. Elevated readings can be a sign of prostate cancer.

Sherry Wilson, a health educator who formerly worked with the department, is a believer in this new surgical technique and believes it has the potential to bring men in for screening sooner because so many of the dreaded surgical side effects are minimized. As an employee of the practice she works to reach out to the patients and their families. She emphasized

that prostate cancer is a family disease and wives often attend the Man to Man meetings held at the centers on the third Thursday of every month.

If prostate cancer is detected before it spreads beyond the prostate gland, the five-year survival rate is 100 percent.

# CHIP Recognized with Family Ties' Embrace Award

The Bureau of Children's Health Insurance (CHIP) was recognized with the 2006 Embrace Family Award at the 5th annual Family Ties Conference held at the Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center.

Presented by the Alabama Family Ties Board of Directors, the annual Embrace Family Award is awarded in four categories in recognition of services to children and adolescents with severe emotional disturbances. Of the four categories, the ALL Kids-Children's Health Insurance Program was recognized in the "current work" category.

The program was acknowledged for its unwavering commitment to children and teens during a recent transition in mental health and substance abuse services. ALL Kids also provides support services and benefits through its ALL Kids Plus program, a benefit expansion package for children with special healthcare needs.

Specifically, ALL Kids received the award for respecting the value of family involvement, listening to and acting on the needs of families and providers, and creating the ALL Kids Behavioral Health Advisory Committee.

"Creating an inclusive behavioral health network that allows for optimum access by families is not an easy task," stated Sarah-Ellen S. Thompson, executive director of Alabama Family Ties. "Gayle Sandlin, the program's director, and Cathy Caldwell, the administrative director, developed a well thought-out plan and consistently negotiated in the best interest of the family. They never lost their focus or forgot their mission."

Ms. Thompson goes on to say that "unfortunately many agencies do not consider the thoughts or ask the opinions of the very ones they are trying to serve. ALL Kids serves as a shining example for other agency programs to follow." Gayle Lees Sandlin, the program's director, states, "The Children's Health Insurance Program was created using a broad roundtable of ideas and perspectives from all areas of the child health arena. We continue to invite input from numerous areas of expertise and from the families we are dedicated to serving."

Alabama Family Ties is an advocacy and educational organization that educates and empowers families with children and adolescents who have severe emotional disturbances through education, family support, and by connecting these families, one to another. The organization also advocates for the proper treatment and care for the severely emotionally disturbed population in the state and to protect their rights. The organization can be reached by email at [help@alfamilyties.org](mailto:help@alfamilyties.org).

By KNOX YE WILLIAMS



Gayle Lees Sandlin, Cathy Caldwell hold award

## 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*.

### Linda Bolding

Center for Health Statistics  
from Jeanette Gay Massing, Helena, Fla.

### Florine Croxton

Center for Health Statistics  
from Ellie Dixon-Patrick,  
West Palm Beach, Fla

### Nicole Henderson

Center for Health Statistics  
from Gwendolyn Denise Austin,  
Trenton, N.J.

### Octavia Johnson

Center for Health Statistics  
from Julia M. Belcher, Birmingham, Ala.

### Octavia Johnson and Terra Tuck

Center for Health Statistics  
from Johnnie L. Robbins and Willow  
D. Wilson, Sylacauga, Ala.

### Dr. Sharon Massingale

Bureau of Clinical Laboratories  
from Mary Dyer, Montgomery, Ala.

### Janis Pritchett

Finance  
from Heidi Hataway,  
Health Promotion & Chronic Disease

### LaShunda Tellis

Center for Health Statistics  
from Beverly King, Orlando, Fla.  
and from Doris Thomas, Savannah, Ga.

### Betty Thomas

Center for Health Statistics  
from Sandi Davis, Pensacola, Fla.



# Coosa Valley Unit of NASW-Alabama Chapter honors Paula Clark

The Coosa Valley, Alabama, Unit of the National Association of Social Workers selected Paula Clark, ALL Kids Regional Coordinator PHA VI, as Social Worker of the Year. Ms. Clark was recognized at the 2006 Social Work Day and Conference March 16 at Jacksonville State University.

A spokesperson for the selection committee said the committee developed a list of individuals who met criteria for the Social Worker of the Year. "Paula Clark was included in that list simply because she is EVERYWHERE. Paula stays busy doing social work, and is considered to be a 'go-to' person regarding social service provision in the Coosa Valley area."

He goes on to say that another reason Ms. Clark's name stayed at the top was the fact that she was selected as the president of the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners in late 2005. This body is responsible for safeguarding the standards of the social work profession and assuring that qualified individuals are credentialed as social workers. "Being selected to serve on this board in the first place is a significant honor, but to

be selected by peers to lead this board for the entire state is a testament to the level of respect that Paula Clark's peers have for her."

Ms. Clark received numerous letters of support from peers, co-workers and associates. One letter of support stated, "Paula is one of the hardest working, most dedicated and efficient social workers I have ever known. She has the highest integrity when it comes to social work values, and has been an excellent advocate for protection of the public and is a strong advocate for the profession."

Another praised her as "truly one of those rare finds who is an excellent example of a career social worker. When I think of social work I think of Paula Clark."

Another letter of support states, "Paula has never turned down an opportunity to serve for the betterment of the public or her chosen profession--and unwaveringly accepts challenges put before her."

Ava Rozelle, ALL Kids regional director, said, "Paula has always

been able to balance a heavy workload without compromising the quality of her work. She approaches her role as regional ALL Kids coordinator for PHA VI with enthusiasm and passion. We know that any assignment given to Paula will be completed in a manner that reflects positively on our program and on the profession of social work."

Gayle Lees Sandlin, the bureau's director, stated, "Paula is an excellent example of the outstanding staff we have in CHIP dedicated to improving the health of Alabama's children and their families. We are very pleased that she has been recognized for all of her hard work."

By KNOXYE WILLIAMS



Shown are (left to right) Angie James, Ava Rozelle, Paula Clark, Gayle Sandlin

## Compliance Checks, continued from page 4....

first offense, \$400 for a second, \$750 for a third, and \$1,000 for a fourth offense if within a two-year period.

Store owners could be offered the opportunity to attend Tobacco Sales Training through the Responsible Vender Program administered by the ABC Board in lieu of a fine if the violation is by an employee and it is the first offense for the retail outlet. Tobacco retail stores interested in learning more about the Responsible Vender

Program for training of their employees may call (334) 271-3840. This program is designed to train employees in legal and responsible sales practices.

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids cites that in Alabama, 8,800 youth under age 18 become new daily smokers each year. Currently in Alabama, approximately 24 percent of high school students have smoked at least once in the past 30 days and approximately 80 to 90 percent of

adults using tobacco began before the age of 18.

To report a store that is selling either tobacco or alcohol illegally to minors, contact ABC Enforcement at 1-800-327-7341. For further information about the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board go the ABC Web site: <http://www.abcboard.alabama.gov>

## *Office of Radiation Control, continued from page 1...*

three and injuring 10. Unknown to the first responders, the explosion spread a large amount of radioactive material over the southeast corner of Houston County and into Georgia and Florida. HAZMAT responders detected radiation and other emergency officials were notified, beginning with the Office of Radiation Control. Players in the exercise began taking action as soon as they received notification.

The 52-page handbook for the exercise notes, "Free play provides a meaningful learning environment for performance improvement within which organizations are expected to respond in accordance with established procedures, plans and policies."

Decision makers from all levels of government simulated making vital judgments related to public health and safety. The exercise also focused attention on preparation, communication and management of multiple agencies responding to radiological conditions. Participants were provided the opportunity to test and validate protocols and procedures for responding to a radiological accident or incident. Limited admission to the emergency operations center meant no one could enter the facility without a badge.

Simulated monitoring and surveying of the scenes, evacuations of residents, school closures, agricultural embargoes and town meetings were carried out. During a radiological accident, the Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center collects and assesses radiological data related to the event and provides information to those in authority.

Public Information Officer Cynthia Green of the City of Dothan and representatives from several other agencies staffed the Joint Information Center which was opened at the Houston County Farm Center. Media briefings, mock news conferences and tours of the exercise venues were conducted.

Whatley served on the media panel, along with Dr. Charles Woernle, assistant state health officer for disease control and prevention, Dr. Brad Fields of the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, and others. The spokespersons drew real-life comparisons involving the health effects of exposures and reassured the public about long-term effects.

The Southern Crossing exercise provided ample opportunity for the incident commander, logistics, planning, finance, safety/security and laboratory positions of the Incident Command System to exercise their responsibilities.

### **Alabama a radiation exercise pioneer**

At a "hot wash" discussion following the event, Whatley explained that Alabama Radiation Control was a pioneer in the use of exercises to demonstrate proficiency and train responders. The first radiological drill followed an incident near Athens, Ala., at Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Plant in February 1975, an event that preceded both Three Mile Island and Chernobyl.

At this initial drill Whatley was situated at the Browns Ferry Meteorological Tower where he relayed radiological data to former Radiological Health director, Aubrey Godwin via telephone. In the early days exercise players kept rolls of dimes for telephone calls in their survey kits, he commented, as a way of comparing our vastly improved communication capabilities to those in the seventies.

Planners dedicated the exercise in memory of Mike Cash and presented plaques in recognition of his many contributions to radiological health monitoring and "as a friend and colleague and a true southern gentleman who is missed by the entire emergency response community." Whatley recognized radiation physicists Tonya Appleyard and Terry Williams for their extraordinary efforts to make the event a success.





# HIV/AIDS Coordinator Janice Robbins receives Purple Heart

**J**anice Robbins, area HIV/AIDS coordinator for Public Health Area 7, was recently honored for her service in Iraq. A special presentation of the Purple Heart and Combat Action Badge, was made to her Aug. 11 by representatives of the 122nd Support Group of Selma, and she was also promoted to Staff Sergeant.

The Purple Heart was presented because Ms. Robbins was wounded in action. The Combat Action Badge provides special recognition to soldiers who personally engage the enemy, or are engaged by the enemy during combat operations.

Ms. Robbins departed for Iraq in May 2003 with the 1165th MP company serving as a Military Policeman—the only female MP in her unit. Soldiers worked 12-hour shifts—rotating days and nights. The frequent mortar attacks and the sounds were terrifying. Their quarters were in a burned-out building which was later renovated by Army engineers.

Ms. Robbins was injured Aug. 19, 2003, when Iraqi soldiers attacked a caravan in which she was traveling in Baghdad. In the roadside bombing her vehicle was hit with a rocket propelled grenade (RPG), rode over an improvised explosive device (IED) and they were hit with small arms fire. She sustained many injuries to her neck, shoulder, hip and back. As a result of her injuries she walks with a cane. She learned to walk again at Fort Benning, Ga., and she received physical therapy at Fort Benning and in Tuscaloosa.

“I’m a true believer in serving my country,” Ms. Robbins said. She has served 19 years in the U.S. Army, Army National Guard and the Army Reserves and has been to many places including Germany, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Current activities for Ms. Robbins include participation in Leadership Selma, the Chamber of Commerce, State HIV Community Planning Group, the Disabled American Veterans Post 61 and the American Legion. She also is working on a master of science degree in public administration.

*The following was printed in her local newspaper:*

## **Soldier honored for sacrifice** *Selma Times-Journal* Sunday, August 13, 2006

Local resident Sgt. Janice O. Robbins said she joined the military to “see the world, and make a difference.”

She has now done both - serving in Iraq, and helping support the Iraqi military effort there.

But, her duty did not come without a price.

Robbins was injured in August 2003 while serving in Iraq when the vehicle she and other soldiers were riding in ran over a mine.

Robbins sustained many injuries - to her neck, shoulder, hip and back.

She has since undergone extensive physical therapy and now walks with a cane.

Robbins received a Purple Heart during a ceremony held Friday at the Department of Health building.

She also was presented a Combat Action Badge and was promoted to Staff Sergeant. In addition, she will be honored tonight at the Selma City Council meeting and on Aug. 21 at U.S. Congressman Artur Davis’ town hall meeting.

Robbins has served her country for 19 years in the U.S. Army, Army National Guard and the Army Reserves.

Sometimes the fighting and danger that continue in Iraq seem to be a long way from us.

But with each of our soldiers who is killed or comes home with injuries, we are reminded of the incredible sacrifice being made.

We congratulate Robbins on her promotion and her honors. We also say thank you for your service.



*Janice Robbins (right) is shown with Carolyn Powell, executive director of Leadership Selma.*

# Partners in Early Breast Cancer Detection

Ten years have passed since the national breast and cervical cancer early detection program, funded through grants from the Centers for Disease Control, began making a difference in the lives of Alabama women. At its heart, the program seeks to detect breast and cervical cancer at its earliest stages and thus reduce the mortality rate from these diseases. The Alabama Department of Public Health has participated in the national detection program through the Alabama Breast & Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (ABCCEDP).

Based on the most recent U.S. Census statistics, approximately 53,000 women in Alabama are eligible for the annual screening and follow-up diagnostic tests available through the Alabama Breast & Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. Of the over 44,000 women who have been screened by the Alabama program since 1997, approximately 919 women have been diagnosed with invasive breast cancer or cervical cancer.

The Susan G. Komen Foundation, North Central Alabama Affiliate, partners with the ABCCEDP to provide screening mammograms to ABC-

CEDP women age 40-49 in the following counties in Alabama: Bibb, Blount, Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Chilton, Clay, Cleburne, Colbert, Coosa, Cullman, DeKalb, Etowah, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Hale, Jackson, Jefferson, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan, Perry, Pickens, Randolph, Shelby, St. Clair, Sumter, Talladega, Tallapoosa, Tuscaloosa, Walker and Winston.

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation was established in 1982 by Nancy Brinker to honor the memory of her sister, Susan Komen, who died from breast cancer at the age of 36. More than 20 years later, the Komen Foundation is a global leader in the fight against breast cancer.

Since 2000, the Komen Foundation has provided funding for approximately 20,000 women in the ABCCED Program. The program is proud of its relationship with the Komen Foundation and the additional women Komen funding has touched.

Women under the age of 50 residing in Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery

counties have an additional advocate in the detection of breast cancer-- the Joy to Life Foundation. The organization was founded by Joy and Richard Blondheim of Montgomery. Joy Blondheim, a breast cancer survivor, is dedicating her time and efforts to women who are fighting to win the battle against breast cancer.

Joy to Life provides women under the age of 50, residing in the three target counties, qualifying for the ABCCED Program, with screening mammograms. An estimated 3,000 women in Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery counties qualify for screening services offered by the Alabama Breast & Cervical Cancer Early Detection. In the past three years, Joy to Life has funded the mammograms for the approximate 341 women who have participated in the ABCCED Program.

The ABCCED Program is proud of its relationship with the Komen Foundation and the Joy to Life Foundation and the additional women their funding has touched. To find out whether you, a family member or a friend qualify for the ABCCED Program call 1-877-234-1456.

## Free Mammograms

Women under 50

in Montgomery, Autauga and Elmore Counties  
ask your health care provider or call  
Toll Free 877-252-3324



Joy to Life

For more information, contact:

Montgomery County - Jackie Wilson, 334-347-9574

Autauga & Elmore Counties - Hazel Cunningham, 334-682-4515

<http://www.joytolife.org>

Founded by a local breast cancer survivor, The Joy to Life foundation is a non-profit organization that provides free mammograms for medically underserved women **under 50 years of age** in Montgomery, Autauga and Elmore counties.

The Alabama Department of Public Health, Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program provides breast and cervical cancer screening for women who are under-insured or un-insured. The Joy to Life Foundation works with ABCCEDP to provide free breast cancer screenings for **women under 50** in the tri-county area who otherwise meet the states' eligibility requirements.

If you are already enrolled in the ABCCEDP and are **younger than 50**, please ask your Primary Care Provider for a Free mammogram through the Joy to Life Foundation. The Clinic will help you schedule your appointment.

If you are not enrolled in the ABCCEDP, please call this number, 877-252-3324, for more information about these free life-saving services through the Joy to Life Foundation.



# Breast & Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Joins with Partner, Komen Foundation

The Alabama Breast & Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program will be sponsoring a team of volunteers to participate in the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, Oct. 14, "Race for the Cure" in Birmingham.

Michele Williams, director of the Early Detection Program, has officially registered as Team Captain of the "Early Detection" team. Please contact Michele at [mwilliams@adph.state.al.us](mailto:mwilliams@adph.state.al.us) if you wish to become a team member.

## Suicide Remains a Disturbing Reality: Be Aware of Its Warning Signs

Alabama experiences more deaths from suicides than from homicides, making suicide the eleventh leading cause of death. Suicide remains one of the most tragic events a family and community can experience.

Suicide is a significant public health problem that has a severe impact upon the citizens of Alabama—it is a leading cause of death due to injury, second only to motor vehicle crashes. In 2004 there were 535 suicides in Alabama compared to 369 homicides. There were also 32 suicides among youth ages 10 to 19, according to the Center for Health Statistics of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Eight percent of youths reported attempting suicide while another 12 percent had made plans to commit suicide. While Alabama's elderly make up 13 percent of the population, they comprise 18 percent of all suicides in the state.

In 2002 Alabama established a Suicide Prevention Task Force dedicated to educating the community about the warning signs of suicide, reducing the rate of suicide in our state, and eliminating the stigma of suicide. The task force was formed as

a joint effort between the Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation and the Department of Public Health in response to the 1999 Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Suicide. Task force membership includes more than 20 professionals representing various public and private organizations.

Dollie Hambrick, task force chair, said, "Alabama Suicide Prevention Task Force members are proud to serve families who face the issue of suicide and are committed to educating the general public about this crucial topic."

Task Force Member Judith Harrington, Ph.D., of Birmingham, stated, "It is my hope that all Alabamians will be well informed enough to know and recognize suicidal warning signs so that we can link arms and surround suicidal children with proper help."

Mental health experts believe suicide is rarely a spur-of-the-moment decision. In the days and hours before people kill themselves, there are usually clues and warning signs. The strongest and most disturbing signs are verbal, with statements such as, "I can't go on," "Nothing matters any more" or even "I'm thinking of ending

it all." Such remarks should always be taken seriously.

Other common warning signs include the following:

- Becoming depressed or withdrawn
- Behaving recklessly
- Getting affairs in order and giving away valued possessions
- Showing a marked change in behavior, attitudes or appearance
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Suffering a major loss or life change

The Alabama Suicide Prevention Task Force has developed a 15-point statewide Alabama Suicide Prevention Plan to encourage suicide prevention efforts to the maximum extent possible. Copies of the plan and other information can be accessed through the Alabama Department of Public Health Web site at [www.adph.org/suicideprevention](http://www.adph.org/suicideprevention).

The national Suicide Prevention lifeline number is 1-800-273-TALK. This toll-free line is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Other information is available at the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Web site at [www.mh.state.al.us](http://www.mh.state.al.us) and at [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).



# \*Calendar of Events\*



**September 27**

Satellite Conf & Web Cast

**Obesity in Home  
Care Patients**  
2:00-4:00 p.m.

For more information contact  
Brenda Elliott, (334) 347-2664,  
extension 402.



**September 28**

Satellite Conf & Web Cast

**Utilizing Government  
Resources in a Disaster:  
Working the System**  
12:00-1:30 p.m.

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



**October 5**

Satellite Conf & Web Cast

**ADPH Statewide  
Staff Meeting**  
3:00-4:00 p.m.

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



**October 18**

Satellite Conf & Web Cast

**Home Health Aides/  
Attendants**  
2:00-4:00 p.m.

For more information contact  
Brenda Elliott, (334) 347-2664,  
extension 402.



**October 20**

Satellite Conf & Web Cast

**Collaboration and  
Conflict Resolution for  
Success in Public Health**  
12:00-1:30 p.m.

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



**October 25**

Satellite Conf & Web Cast

**Contraceptive  
Technology Update**

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



**October 26**

Satellite Conf & Web Cast

**Ensuring Quality  
in the Collaborative  
Practice Agreement**  
10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

For more information contact  
Diane Oetting, (334) 954-2500.



**November 1**

Satellite Conf & Web Cast

**Infection  
Control Update**  
2:00-4:00 p.m.

For more information contact  
Brenda Elliott, (334) 347-2664,  
extension 402.



**November 29**

Satellite Conf & Web Cast

**Fundamental of HIV  
Counseling: Level 1**  
2:00-4:00 p.m.

For more information contact  
Annie Vosel, (334) 206-2959.