

Hepatitis Health



Hepatitis Day at the Capitol

On March 17, 2009, the Hepatitis Prevention Program (HPP) sponsored their annual *Hepatitis Day at the Capitol*. The purpose of the event was to promote hepatitis awareness, education and prevention. DOH and various community partners provided several exhibits, along with educational materials.

Highlights of the day included a press conference where State Surgeon General **Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros** emphasized the importance of hepatitis vaccines for adults, State Food & Waterborne Disease Coordinator **Dr. Roberta Hammond** talked about hepatitis A, and local advocate **Cherry Douglas** shared how hepatitis C changed her life. **Tom Liberti**, Chief of the Bureau of HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis, was the master of ceremonies and spoke about some of the successes of HPP.

Becky D'Alessio from the Leon County Health Department was also on hand and provided free hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccines to the public. People were lined up non-stop to get immunized. In less than four hours, over 40 people were risk-assessed and vaccinated.

Becky D'Alessio shoots!

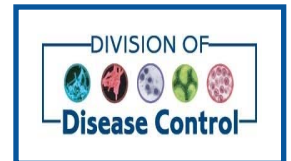


Dr. Viamonte Ros and Tom Liberti prepare for the press conference.

More *Hepatitis Day at the Capitol* photos on page 3.

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Name that Tune!

"Jeremiah was a bullfrog"

Was a good friend of mine"

Answer on page 10

National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day By Karen Simons

In many cultures, spring represents a time of equality and balance and is a time of profound change, new beginnings, and birth. For these reasons, the first day of spring was chosen for National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. Florida ranks 11th in the United States in terms of Native American population.

March 20, 2009 marked the third annual National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, with a special ceremony held at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee. It started with drumming and then a dance. One component of dance in Native American culture is to honor your ancestors, and this seemed appropriate to do for those no longer with us. We also had a blessing by Nelson Redhawk Bell.

Then, Tom Liberti, Chief of the Bureau of HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis, announced the formation of the bureau's 2009 American Indian Advisory Council. The council is comprised of five members representing tribes from across the state, and each is a leader among their people.

As they honored and respected us with the gifts of a blessing, drumming and dancing, the Eastern Muskogee Creek Tribe presented the bureau with a Resolution their council adopted recognizing the day and the importance of HIV and AIDS prevention. Tom presented them with a gift of leather binders. In Native American culture, when someone presents you with a gift, it is appropriate to present something back. It was important that we give something back to show our respect and honor as well. The item is not the important thing; it is the acknowledgment of the respect and honor that counts. We closed with a flute performance by Jeremy Lang.

The drum is sacred - it is used for religious ceremonies and to communicate with the Creator (God), among other things. The drum used at this ceremony happened to be a medicine drum, which they felt was appropriate for the event.



Pictured left to right: Albert Four Dogs Johns, Tom Tontigh, Jerry Lang, Jeremy Lang and Nelson Redhawk Bell.



Wendy Four Dogs Johns and Tom Liberti

(Photos by Jeff Simons)

HEPATITIS DAY AT THE CAPITOL MARCH 17, 2009



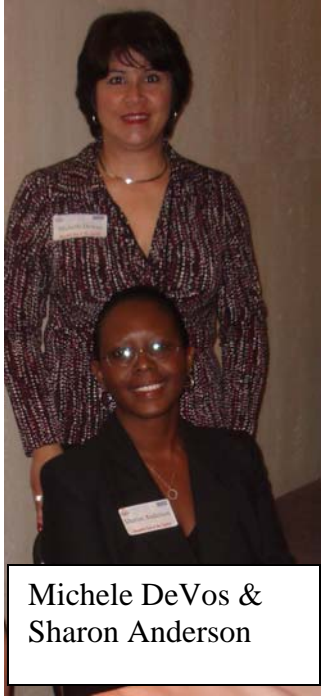
Dr. Hammond



L to R: Dena Hall, Bruce Campbell & Hans Havlykke



Dr. Viamonte Ros



Michele DeVos & Sharon Anderson



Cherry Douglas



Cathy Mellinger



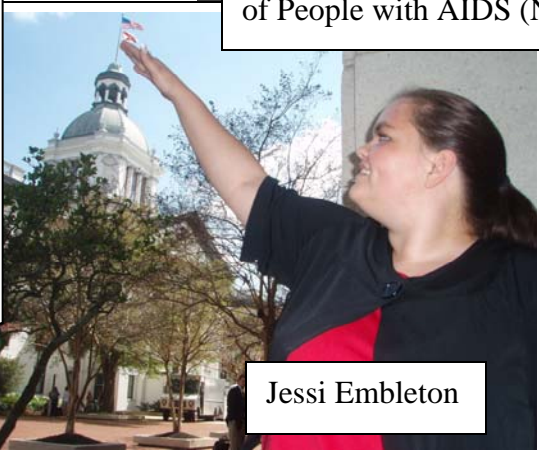
Rachel Purcell



L to R: Tom Liberti, Dr. Viamonte Ros, Cherry Douglas & Michael Rajner, National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA)



Makeshia Barnes & Kenneth Johnson



Jessi Embleton



Karen Simons & Pat Simmons

PrideFest

Submitted by Edith Garcia

This is the second year that Broward County Health Department (BCHD) participated in PrideFest. This event in Fort Lauderdale was held on March 21 and 22, and was a collaborative effort involving many different programs and agencies. This event attracts approximately 10,000 people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.

The BCHD had four tables inside the War Memorial Park that consisted of an entire row of the indoor space. The Hepatitis Team had the opportunity to educate and counsel the LGBT community on viral hepatitis. At the event, we vaccinated 171 people with both hepatitis A and B vaccines. As you can see in the following pictures, the community was especially welcoming to the vaccination campaign.



Left to right: Edith Garcia , David Harris, Oma Megbuluba, and Marie McMillan (all from BCHD), Robert Pavlov (Volunteer/Outreach), Katie Cyphert (BCHD), and Harold Levine (Hep Team, NY).

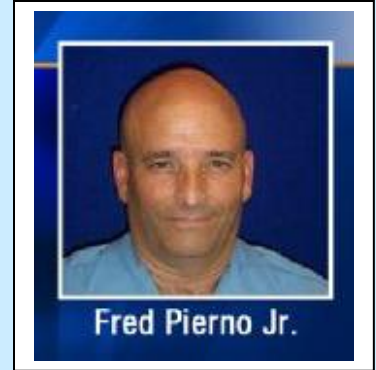


Florida Firefighter Dies of Hepatitis Infection

<http://cms.firehouse.com:80/content/article/article.jsp?id=62887§ionId=39>

Martin County Fire Rescue is mourning the loss of one of its own. Fred Pierno Jr., died February 25, 2009, at his Port Saint Lucie home due to hepatitis C (HCV) he contracted on the job as a Firefighter/ EMT with Martin County Fire Rescue.

Pierno had been under medical treatment since October 2006 for HCV infection he sustained while performing his firefighter duties. He's the 13th firefighter in the United States and the seventh in Florida to be classified as a Line of Duty death due to a hepatitis infection.



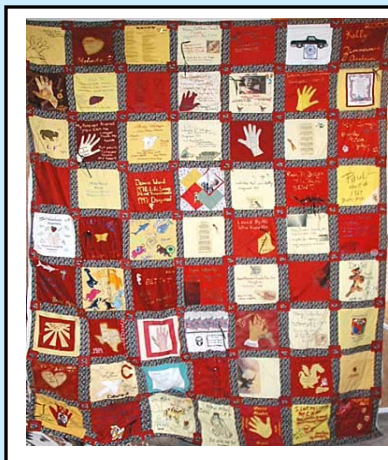
"Sometimes in life you're privileged enough to serve with someone whose character and commitment you never question, someone whose loyalty and reliability are unwavering -- and Ferdinando "Freddy" Pierno was just that person," said Martin County Fire Rescue Chief Tom Billington. "You never want to lose anyone on the job, but to lose someone of Freddy's caliber and decency makes the loss all the more crushing."

International Hep-C Quilts

<http://www.geocities.com/hepcquilt/>

The Hep-C quilts are made up of patches submitted by people from all over the world with hepatitis C. They are sewn together by me, Marie Stern, in my spare time. I am 1A. I possibly contracted the hepatitis C virus (HCV) in 1978 and auto-immune hepatitis several years later. This is my way of helping the HCV community to be heard and seen. The first quilt was created in 1996. It became so large that I started a separate one a year later. There are now four quilts for display. A fifth one will be started as soon as I receive your squares. Please pass on the word! The quilts are available for display at various public and private functions.

The quilts have been all over the United States and Canada and have had a huge impact on people's lives. Please make sure this continues by speaking to your friends, nurses and doctors about the personal justification these quilts have on everyone. A year hasn't gone by that the quilts haven't been to less than 6 events.



Quilt # 3

To reserve the Hep-C quilts for an event, email me at: marie.stern@gmail.com Several months notice is required to secure your reservation. There are currently four quilts that can be displayed separately or together.



World TB Day

By Rachel Purcell

March 24th commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of *M. tuberculosis*, the bacterium that causes tuberculosis (TB). Among infectious diseases, TB remains a leading killer of adults, with an estimated 1.7 million TB-related deaths worldwide in 2006.

Within the past 30 years, Florida has experienced a decline followed by a resurgence in reported TB cases. In 1978, 1,724 cases were reported. Through the mid-1980s, cases steadily declined, but by 1990, a significant resurgence occurred with 1,832 cases of TB reported. Public support and public health interventions worked together to bring this increase under control. By 1994, cases had declined to 1,762, and cases have steadily declined ever since. In 2008, 953 TB cases were reported. Florida has seen an overall 48 percent decrease in TB cases since 1990.

The Bureau of TB and Refugee Health commemorated World TB Day with several activities including educational displays at the Capitol and Kleman Plaza in Tallahassee. Below are photos from Kleman Plaza.



Nicholas Jeffrey
& Zsonelle
Martin



L to R: Rachel Purcell, Jim Cobb & Cynthia Benjamin



Gov. Crist & April



Cynthia with the Governor



L to R: Mark, Dena & Carl



Melissa Brooks



April Crowley & Dena Hall

Florida Viral Hepatitis Council

The Florida Viral Hepatitis Council (FVHC) met February 19-20 in Tampa. At this particular meeting, a lot of focus was on viral hepatitis in correctional settings. Council member **Frank Johanson, M.D.**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Health Services – Clinical for the Florida Department of Corrections (DC), talked about the collaborative effort with Department of Health (DOH) in treating inmates for HIV. He added that they're also doing a good job with vaccinating and treating for hepatitis.

Former DC Medical Director **David Thomas, M.D.**, gave an enthusiastic presentation on screening, immunizations, and treatment of hepatitis, which led to a lively discussion about chronic hepatitis in prisons. Everyone agreed that more education and awareness are needed in all correctional facilities. Many people are hesitant to get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B, but those who know the facts usually want to start the series of shots immediately.



Peggy St. Croix, Michelle Scavnicky & Diana Wood



Dr. William Chen



Dr. Thomas & Dr. Johanson



Council Co-Chair
Dr. Deborah Orr



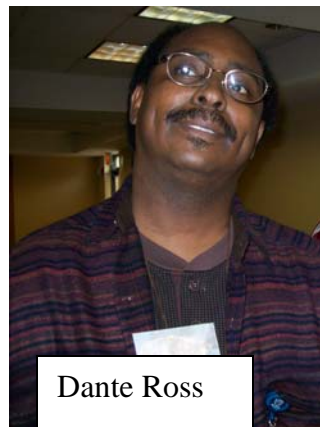
L to R: Marc Konecny, Gordon Licata & Michael Amidei



Guttenberg Pierre & Pat Simmons



Phil Reichert & Dr. Thomas



Dante Ross



Enid Santiago-Cruz &
Rebecca Beaman

Twelfth Annual Positive Living Conference Held in March

The 12th annual Positive Living Conference was held in Fort Walton Beach on March 13-15, 2009. The conference was dedicated to AIDS activist, Martin Delaney, founder and executive director of Project Inform. Delaney was to be a keynote speaker at the conference, but passed away suddenly in January from complications related to liver cancer.

The conference's main sponsors were OASIS (Okaloosa AIDS Support and Informational Services) Inc., in Fort Walton, and the National Association of People with AIDS. Other sponsors included the Bureau of HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis and several pharmaceutical companies that manufacture HIV antiretrovirals.

Phil Reichert, Administrator of the Hepatitis Prevention Program in Tallahassee, and Dr. Jeffrey Beal, Medical Director for the Bureau of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis, spoke in the opening plenary session about hepatitis and its epidemiological relationship to people infected with HIV/AIDS. Phil talked about hepatitis prevention efforts in Florida, including the provision of free testing and hepatitis A and B vaccine for adults at risk of viral hepatitis. Dr. Beal talked about treatment options and hepatitis C and HIV co-infection.

Additionally, Thelma Thiel, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Hepatitis Foundation International (www.HepatitisFoundation.org), in Silver Spring, Maryland, spoke about reaching specific audiences with hepatitis prevention messages. She showed a twelve-minute video directed toward young people in their teens and twenties that described some of the functions of the liver and how to keep your liver healthy. Educational videos and materials are available at the HFI website.

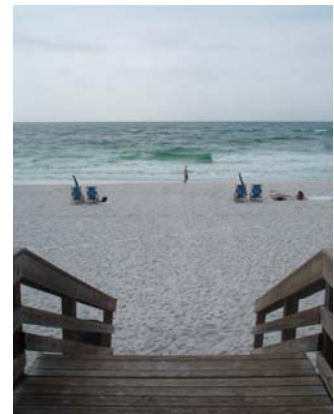
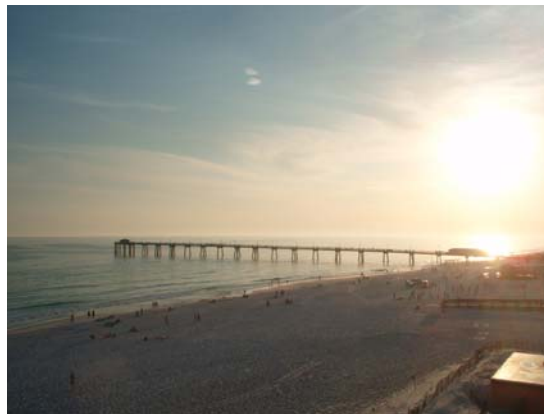
Tom Liberti, Chief of the Bureau of HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis, provided an update on the state of HIV in the Southeast and in Florida. He sits on the board of the Southern AIDS Coalition.

Dr. Beal also presented a breakout session with details on staying healthy while co-infected with viral hepatitis and HIV. This was the first Positive Living Conference that included presentations on viral hepatitis.

According to Butch McKay, Executive Director of OASIS, Inc., and conference organizer, the conference included over 370 participants from every state in the Southeastern US. Most counties in Florida were represented in the conference attendance. Most of the participants were individuals already infected with HIV, each looking for ways and means to become and remain healthy.



Martin Delaney



A couple of scenes along the Gulf of Mexico in Ft. Walton Beach

Easy B Facts



HBV ADVOCATE
www.hbvadvocate.org

**Hepatitis C
Support Project**

VERSION 4.0 • January 2009

Acute HBV

Hepatitis B is caused by a virus called the hepatitis B virus (HBV for short). When you first get HBV it is called acute, which is a short-term infection that usually last for 6 months or less. There can be many symptoms of acute hepatitis B such as

yellowing of the skin and eyes, feeling very tired, stomach aches, coca-cola colored pee and clay colored stools (poop). But it is important to know that many people especially children may not have any symptoms.

Can't remember getting sick from hepatitis B? You're not alone: 70% of people who had acute hepatitis B never felt sick or experienced any symptoms.

Most people will get over hepatitis B and not have any problems for the rest of their lives. However, if 100 mothers have chronic HBV infection – 90 out of 100 babies will develop chronic hepatitis B – that is unless the baby is given some shots, such as the HBV vaccine within 12 hours after being born. This will stop most infants from getting chronic hepatitis B.

In adults only about 5 or 6 adults out of 100 who get acute hepatitis B will develop chronic HBV.

To learn about chronic hepatitis B and ways that HBV is transmitted see our Easy B fact sheets: *Chronic HBV* and *HBV Transmission & Prevention*.

Answer to Name that Tune from page 1: "Joy to the World" by Three Dog Night

One of the three lead vocalists in the band, Three Dog Night, **Charles "Chuck" Negron** was born in Manhattan. He grew up in The Bronx, New York City, where he sang in local doo-wop groups and played basketball both in schoolyard pick-up games and at Taft High School; the latter talent led to his being recruited to play college basketball in California, including California State University, Los Angeles.

He eventually joined singers Danny Hutton and Cory Wells to found Three Dog Night in 1968; that group became one of the most successful bands of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The rock and roll lifestyle took its toll on Negron, and by the time Three Dog Night disbanded in 1977, Negron had a serious heroin addiction problem. Sleeping in abandoned buildings, suffering from emphysema and **hepatitis C**, the former 6'1", 185 lb athlete and rock idol had, by 1991, shrunk to a cadaverous 126 lbs.

He ultimately overcame his addiction and embarked on a solo career, recording two albums: *Am I Still In Your Heart* (1995) "Joy to the World" (Christmas CD – 1996) and *Long Road Back* (1999). He also wrote a 1999 autobiography, *Three Dog Nightmare*. In the book, Negron attributes his recovery from heroin addiction to his turning to God in desperation, after dropping out of over 30 drug treatment facilities.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuck_Negron



Three Dog Night



Chuck Negron



And my head I'd be scratchin'
while my thoughts were busy hatchin'
If I only had a brain....

Message from the Editor
Hepatitis Health is brought to you by the Hepatitis Prevention Program, Bureau of HIV/AIDS at the Florida Department of Health. We want to know what you're doing in the community to prevent viral hepatitis. Please submit your articles and photos to:
April.Crowley@doh.state.fl.us