

the health advisor

DOH Mission:

To promote &
protect the health
& safety of all
people in Florida.

May/June 2006

Office of Performance Improvement

A sterling performance!



Miami-Dade County Health Department Awarded the Governor's Sterling Award

The Miami-Dade County Health Department was presented with the 2006 Governor's Sterling Award by M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D., Florida Secretary of Health, during the 14th annual Governor's Sterling Award Banquet June 2 at the JW Marriott Grande Lakes in Orlando. John Zingale, executive director, Florida Department of Revenue and John A. Pieno, Jr., chairman of the Florida Sterling Council, were co-presenters of the award. The Sterling Award was presented to Lillian Rivera, R.N., M.S.N., administrator, Miami-Dade County Health Department and a contingency of the Miami-Dade County Health Department team.

Other attendees included Bonita Sorensen, M.D., M.B.A., Florida deputy health officer; Nancy Humbert, A.R.N.P., M.S.N., Florida deputy secretary for health and Florida women's health officer; Robert Eadie, J.D., Florida deputy secretary for administration as well as other Florida Department of Health staff. The St. Johns County and Palm Beach County health departments were both honored with the Sterling Challenge Award. The Sumter County, Palm Beach County and Polk County health departments were also awarded with the Sterling Navigator Award.

The Sterling Award is the most prestigious accolade in Florida that honors businesses and organizations that have achieved performance superiority within their management and operations. This is the second time the Miami-Dade County Health Department has been a Sterling Award winner. The first award was earned in 2002. Ramblewood Elementary School of Coral Springs was also a 2006 Sterling Award recipient.

"I am pleased, I am proud and humbled to accept the Governor's Sterling Award on behalf of the employees of the Miami-Dade County Health Department. This award is a reflection of our belief in organization performance excellence," said Ms. Rivera. "Our passion for our mission, vision and values translates into extraordinary services to the community that we serve. Thanks again to the Sterling Council, our governor and to all the employees of the Miami-Dade County Health Department. (We're) second-time winners!"

For 14 years, the Governor's Sterling Award has recognized organizations and businesses in Florida for performance excellence. Each winner has undergone an in-depth assessment and evaluation that included an expert team of examiners conducting an on-site review of the organization's management systems and organizational performance results. ■

Answering the call on nursing shortage

HOW IS THE NURSING STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM HELPING TO ADDRESS THE NURSING SHORTAGE CHALLENGE? IT IS PROVIDING OVER \$3.3 MILLION TO HELP NURSES DEFRAY THE COST OF THEIR NURSING LOANS.

The National Center for Healthcare Workforce Analysis projects that by 2020, Florida will need 61,000 more nurses than are currently projected to be available. Workforce shortages are among the most pressing issues facing many hospitals and health care systems today. Nurses, collectively, make up the largest group providing patient care and medical assistance. The decrease in nurse staffing in any institution, e.g. hospitals, county health departments, community/migrant health centers, can dramatically compromise the delivery of healthcare. Shortage of nurses prevents hospitals and other health systems from appropriately staffing their facilities, thus hindering the ability to provide full-range services—which also affects quality of patient care.

Enhancing the state's nursing practices through education, research and evaluation has always been the mission of the Office of Public Health Nursing (OPHN). Mindful of the nursing challenge that exists, the OPHN answers the call on the nursing shortage through the Nursing Student Loan Forgiveness Program (NSLFP) which it administers.

Established in 1989, and located in the OPHN since 2002, the NSLFP's mission is to "encourage qualified personnel to seek employment in areas of this state in which critical nursing shortages exist." Since 2002, the program has provided over \$3.3 million to nearly 600 nurses in the state of Florida. To be eligible for the program one must be:

- a graduate from an approved nursing program,
- have loans incurred toward a nursing education, and
- work full-time at one of the designated sites established by §1009.66 F.S.

The program is moving full speed ahead in its quest to have a positive impact on the areas that are traditionally hard to recruit and retain nurses. Currently, the NSLFP has 184 nurses enrolled, and has awarded a total of \$429,000 since January 2006. Each participant must be employed and work a full year prior to receiving up to \$4,000 toward the principle of his/her loan obligation.

While there is a growing interest in the program, the funds are limited and so is the number of nurses that can be enrolled each quarter. Since June 2005, the program has received a total of 1,280 phone calls of interest—an average of 128 per month—and 373 applications submitted for enrollment consideration. The program's primary goals, according to Laura Brazell, R.N., who currently oversees this effort, are to increase the participation of, and partnership with, community migrant centers, county health departments, and public schools; in addition, the program seeks to increase base funding to enroll more nurses.

For more information contact the NSLFP at: <http://www.NSLFP.com>, or call 245-4444 ext. 3503; the NSLFP staff is always eager to assist. ■



Brevard CHD immunization team hits the decks

Cruise ship vaccinations address growing problem in travel industry

A confirmed case of rubella in a crew member of a cruise ship in February brought about a full-scale, onboard immunization effort conducted by staffers from Brevard County Health Department (BCHD). Jim Richardson, health services manager, submitted the following details on how the project requiring the vaccination of 1,180 crew members came to be.

On Feb. 20 BCHD received lab results for rubella from a Cape Canaveral hospital. The patient was a crew member on a cruise ship that was to dock at Port Canaveral in five days. The BCHD Epidemiology office called the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Quarantine Service in Miami and was informed of another case of rash illness that CDC had received. An investigation was initiated for both cases.

The cases involved two crew members, a 35-year-old female youth counselor from the Philippines and a 23-year-old male waiter from the Ukraine. The female patient presented with symptoms on Jan. 28, was seen again on Jan. 31 and isolated. She had been on board for 10 days and had worked a seven-day cruise to the Caribbean. Her symptoms were consistent with rubella. The male patient had boarded the ship on Feb. 4. His symptoms were fever and rash but because of a continuing measles outbreak in the Ukraine, his country of origin, measles was suspected. Rubella IgM was negative in his case, but his serology was positive for measles. Both cases were isolated in their cabins on board the ship.

Investigations were done in partnership with the BCHD and the CDC Quarantine Service. Because both cases were isolated and had a good contact record, roommates and coworkers in close contact were identified, isolated and investigated. The possibility still existed that other crew members may have been exposed to this highly infectious disease due to close living and working environments. The decision to immunize the crew on the ship was a collaborative decision with CDC and the cruise line; all agreed that the plan would be put into action immediately if the first case came back positive for rubella. On Feb. 22 the positive confirmation of Rubella came. BCHD members sprang into action, gathering vaccine, supplies and enough staff to board the ship on Saturday, Feb. 25 in order to vaccinate 1,180 crew members.

The immunization team was made up of 18 staff members. Most were from epidemiology, community health and immunizations, although each of the three clinic offices, administration and school health were represented. Two team members weren't on the dock to board the ship, but without them, the job could not have been done: Sharon Simek from purchasing and Jewell Borden from stores/warehouse. These two moved mountains to obtain vaccine and have it and the necessary supplies ready for Saturday.

The cruise line was very cooperative and collaborated with CDC on the following recommendations. The recommendations were to:

- **Immunize with a single dose of MMR all susceptible crew members on ship for voyages between Jan. 21–Feb. 17 including those who no longer worked on the crew.**
- **Immunize new crew arriving from Feb. 21 to March 31.**
- **Draw serology for all susceptible individuals not being immunized, which included pregnant women, immunocompromised individuals and those who are at risk for an allergic reaction to the vaccine.**

- **Inform passengers.**
- **Keep CDC and BCHD informed with continuous surveillance of suspected cases, numbers of passengers and crew on board, crew members vaccinated and number of crew developing rubella symptoms.**
- **Organize a team from the Brevard County Health Department and CDC to assist the cruise line by providing immunizations to crew members, collecting specimens and conducting investigations as needed.**

The immunization of cruise ship personnel is not new to the Brevard County Health Department. In early August 2002, a cruise liner while still at sea notified the port that it had two crew members with rubella-like symptoms. Dr. Heidar Heshmati, BCHD director, determined that the ship was not a danger to the port and could dock. The next day Barry Inman (BCHD) and Tony Drew (CDC) met the ship and took samples. Rubella was confirmed quickly and a team from BCHD and CDC boarded the cruise liner and administered 950 shots in five hours. This time, the "experienced" BCHD immunization team completed 1,151 doses in five hours, bettering their rate of immunization by 40 doses per hour. This means that they were immunizing at a rate of 230 doses per hour. The job that our staff did was phenomenal; they are to be commended.

The success of both of these missions involving the handling of cases of communicable disease on board a cruise ship. It is clear that the health department in partnership with CDC is more than equipped to handle the need for mass vaccination. The results of these two events clearly illustrate that when time is essential, the local CHD has the experience and staff power to mount a quick and effective response.

For the most recent case, surveillance continued, led by the cruise ship medical team. As of March there had been a total of seven cases of communicable diseases: one measles, one rubella, two physician-diagnosed varicella, and three rash illnesses, nonspecific viral illnesses or reactions to the vaccine. Lab tests for measles and rubella were negative on the last three. All cases were immunized because they might have been exposed prior to vaccination and incubating at the time the vaccination was administered. Further efforts will be made in collaboration with CDC and the cruise lines to identify new cases and respond until the outbreak is resolved.

We appreciate the cooperation of cruise lines to help us in this effort, especially the medical team and the guidance from CDC, as always. The job was well done with excellent planning, positive attitudes, teamwork and the spirit of volunteerism. Two of our team members even came from out-of-town and went to great lengths to be there in time to participate. We are very proud of our staff. ■

Members of the cruise ship immunization team:
Heidar Heshmati, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D.; Saroj Aggarwal, M.D., M.B.A.; Robin Benton, R.N.; Jewell Borden; Christy Carberry, R.N.; Elizabeth Carroll, R.N.; John Davis, R.N.; Phoebe Griffin; Pamela Hamilton, R.N.; Barry Inman, C.I.C., C.H.E.; Nancy Mitchell, R.N.; Karen Ottenhoff, R.N.; Regina Pappagallo, R.N.; Bruce Pierce, M.N., A.R.N.P.; Alan Righenzi; Patti Seibert, R.N.; Ellen Sigler, R.N.; Sharon Simek; Karen Street, R.N.; Tonya Torbert; and Thomas O'Bryant.



Nurse Rosary Boyle immunizes a young client while mother bears up as best she can.

Child immunization rate on the rise in Seminole County

VACCINES ARE AMONG THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AND COST-EFFECTIVE PUBLIC HEALTH TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR PREVENTING DISEASE AND DEATH. However, nearly one million children in the United States are not adequately immunized. Seminole County Health Department (SCHD) has had success with its immunizations program, which involves partnering with physicians and others to make these injections available to all children.

Two core functions of SCHD's immunization program are to identify children who need vaccinations and assist parents and providers in ensuring that all children are immunized at the appropriate age. "We work closely with Seminole County School Board to ensure that all school-age children are up to date with their vaccinations" said Mike Napier, SCHD administrator. This collaboration paid off in 2004 when Seminole County's percentage of completion for all required vaccines for children starting kindergarten was 96 percent.

Identifying children who have not been fully immunized and are not of school age can be a bit more challenging. Yet last year, Seminole County was one of only 30 counties to surpass Florida's early childhood immunization goal of 85 percent coverage rate. Working together with physicians, SCHD immunized 93 percent of two-year-olds throughout the county with vaccines needed to protect against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella and H. influenza type B.

With its new campaign slogan 'Complete the Coverage,' the program aims to protect 90 percent of these two-year-olds with the same vaccination course described above, with the addition of hepatitis B and varicella, by the year 2007. "It is our teamwork with local partners and medical providers that makes this kind of success possible and motivates us to exceed our goals," said Kristi Hamilton, program manager of the SCHD's immunization program. ■

Media campaign educates public of signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke

The heart attack and stroke prevention unit of the Bureau of Chronic Disease this spring has conducted an ambitious, multifaceted awareness and research campaign. It is aimed at increasing public awareness of the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke, and the critical importance of calling 9-1-1 when someone exhibits these signs. The initiative also garnered valuable data from the public that will illuminate future awareness campaigns.

Heart disease and stroke are, respectively, the first and third leading causes of death in Florida. However, both diseases are largely preventable. The goal of the Florida Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program is to decrease cardiovascular disease related death and disability by promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors and comprehensive strategies that promote cardiovascular health.

The media campaign and research project received \$140,000 in 2005–06 funding from the Centers for Disease Control, as part of a four-year partnership. To assist the education aimed at increasing people's understanding of these health issues and the need to properly and quickly respond, DOH broadcast a paid radio public service spot schedule March through May in the targeted areas of Miami/Dade and Duval County/Jacksonville. These spots specifically targeted residents 35 years and older. These markets were chosen due to the prevalence of the target populations residing there: African Americans, Hispanic Americans as well as the general population. The media campaign included 1,800 radio spots, on-air interviews featuring local DOH experts, radio station remotes at large public events, with on-air promotion and distribution of Heart Attack and Stroke Prevention's giveaway materials. An internet "micro-site" was developed and linked to the web sites of all the radio stations involved in the campaign. The site has received very positive feedback; visit it at www.Live2tellit.com

The research segment of the project has two components: an evaluation of the radio campaign immediately after it ran, and a statewide research effort involving focus groups throughout Florida. All of this data will be considered when the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention plans future public education campaigns.

If you have questions about the program or its media campaign, contact Connie Betterley, M.S., R.D., LD/N, health education specialist, at 850/245-4444, ext. 2838 or SunCom 205-4444, ext. 2838. ■



Health Inspiration

Mid-life marathoner: "I realized I am the only one who can fix me... (I must) start one step at a time."

Ann Morris, a registered nurse in Gulf County Health Department's school health program, celebrated her 50th birthday by challenging herself to walk in the 26.2 mile Disney Marathon on Jan. 8. This was her first marathon, and she and a friend started training in June 2005 by just walking, gradually increasing their pace and mileage. Soon they progressed to walking in several local five kilometer (3.1 miles) races.

Energized by her success, Morris talked to marathon veterans and gleaned "been there, done that" advise on avoiding injuries, blisters and other perils that can befall marathoners. Then she dreamed big and set her sights for the race at Disney.

"This has been one of the best things I have ever done for myself; I feel healthier and have restored some of my confidence that I had lost over the years from being overweight," Morris said. "A walking program doesn't require a lot of physical demand on your body and the benefits from it are

wonderful! We all have full schedules and it is hard to find extra time for ourselves but, I finally realized that I am the only one who can fix me and I would just have to start one step at a time," she said.

Disney requires participants to maintain a 16-minute mile, something Morris was gratified to find fairly easy to do. She adopted an inspirational motto for herself and says focusing on it helped her start some things that she had put off due to fear of failure.

Something this positive and transformative must be shared, she feels. Morris has invited all her coworkers to join her one evening each week for a short meeting and walk. She has laid out one-, two- and three-mile courses and stresses that participants can walk as slow or as fast as they like. The rest of the week she encourages walkers to go on their own or with a friend as often as possible. She is also working on a "half-marathon" for sixth graders in Wewahitchka. ■

Gadsden County spreads the message—breastfeeding is a public health priority



SUSAN TAYLOR, M.A., B.S.N., R.N., IBCLC, BREASTFEEDING AND PEER COUNSELING COORDINATOR FOR THE GADSDEN COUNTY WIC PROGRAM, recently provided an 18-hour training to professional and paraprofessional employees from various community agencies throughout north Florida's Big Bend area on the importance of promoting and supporting breast feeding. The training, which was sponsored by the Gadsden County Healthy Start Program, sought to reinforce breastfeeding

as the norm for infant feeding and nurturing. It stressed the importance of providing evidence-based education and support to pregnant and postpartum women.

The program communicated the risks for babies who are not breastfed. Research has shown that when babies were not breastfed, the post-neonatal mortality rate of all infants in the United States increased by 21 percent. Another study concluded that breastfeeding among black women is just as important as birth weight in protecting against infant death. Therefore, racial disparity in infant mortality could be reduced if more black women breastfed.

As a result, the Gadsden County Health Department has teamed up with community agencies to enhance and improve breastfeeding initiation and duration within the community. The training provided practical tools for implementing a successful breastfeeding program. The collaboration between the attendees further empowered them to protect, promote and support breastfeeding with their participants.

In addition, the Gadsden County WIC and Nutrition Program recently received a grant to implement the Loving Support® Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program, which will broaden its underlying mission to promote maternal and child health through optimal nutrition. For more information on breastfeeding education please e-mail Susan_Taylor@doh.state.fl.us. ■

References: American Academy of Pediatrics. Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk. *Pediatrics*, 2005; 115-496.

Forste R. et al. The decision to breastfeed in the United States: does race matter? *Pediatrics* 2001; 108-291-296.

CMS news

Family/nurse care coordination partnership funded by national research grant

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NURSING RESEARCH AWARDED IN APRIL A GRANT OF \$161,000 TO A COMMUNITY-BASED STUDY ON FAMILY/NURSE CARE COORDINATION PARTNERSHIP. The study brings together Children's Medical Services (CMS), University of North Florida, Duval County Health Department and the Jacksonville Association for Retarded Citizens to research and improve care coordination services to CMS families in Northeast Florida.

"Care coordination is a defining component of the CMS program," said Deputy Secretary of Health for CMS, Joseph J. Chiaro, M.D. "Participating in this study will help us better understand how families interact with their nurses and develop a tool that other states around the country can use to care for children with special health care needs."

Children's Medical Services provides care coordination services in each of the 22 area offices around the state. This care coordination service links the patients' families and their healthcare providers. Care coordinators assist in identifying the needs of the patient, explain recommended treatments or diagnoses, offer general health education and guidance and act as personal advocates for a child enrolled in the CMS program.

The way Florida's CMS offers comprehensive care coordination is unique in the nation. One goal of the grant is to create standards that can be shared with health care providers around the country. To do so, regional focus groups will be conducted with CMS nurse care coordinators and families in northeast Florida to learn more about the way these two groups work together. The focus groups will research what CMS nurse care coordinators do to provide help for children with special health care needs; the groups also will work with CMS families to find out how the care coordination service empowers them to make good health care decisions. At the end of the study, CMS, UNF, Duval County Health Department and the Jacksonville Association for Retarded Citizens will use reports, presentations, publications and meetings to share the information with all interested parties. The grant funds are projected through March 31, 2008.

The Children's Medical Service Unit is dedicated to providing care to children with special health care needs. For more information, visit the DOH Web site at www.doh.state.fl.us and select Children's Medical Services from the drop down menu or visit www.cms-kids.com. ■



CMS newborn hearing program a partner in new federal initiative

THE CHILDREN'S MEDICAL SERVICES (CMS) NEWBORN HEARING PROGRAM HAS BEEN SELECTED BY THE FEDERAL MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH BUREAU AND THE NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE to participate in a new initiative intended to improve follow-up care to the newborn hearing screening process.

Hearing loss is the most common birth disorder in newborn children, with approximately 600 babies born each year in Florida with some degree of hearing loss. Over 6,000 children in Florida fail their hearing screens. The Children's Medical Services infant hearing program seeks to prevent or minimize the effects of hearing loss on language development, academic performance and cognitive development through early intervention services. Through educational workshops, publications and advocacy work, the infant hearing program provides information about deaf and hard-of-hearing issues to parents and professionals alike.

This new initiative seeks to ensure that newborns who do not pass hearing screening receive the follow-up care they need. A stronger connection between primary care physicians and specialists through the child's medical home will provide timely, comprehensive and coordinated care to address the child's hearing deficiency. This initiative will also involve many other Children's Medical Services programs including newborn screening, early intervention program and primary care, as well as CMS specialty care physicians, families and Medicaid staff. ■

"How we're doin'" results out soon

FORMER NEW YORK CITY MAYOR ED KOCH WAS FAMOUS FOR ASKING HIS CONSTITUENTS "HOW AM I DOIN'?" The Department of Health's version of that question will be answered in late June, when the results of the 2006 employee satisfaction survey become available to all employees.

The survey, conducted during the month of March, was completed with an overall response rate of 67 percent. After tabulation, all survey reports will be posted on the Office of Performance Improvement intranet at http://dohiws.doh.state.fl.us/Divisions/Perf_Improvement/QM/ESS/ESS.htm. Hard copies of the individual organizational reports will also be available.

The survey results will provide important trend data on the department's progress in improving employee satisfaction throughout the organization. The 2006 survey data will be compared to the 2004 and 2002 results. Members of the Office of Performance Improvement staff will be available to assist with interpretation of the data and can help develop action plans to drive improvement.

Questions? Call Jeanne Lane in the Office of Performance Improvement at (850)245-4007 or SunCom 205-4007. ■

Orange CHD wins FSECC Chairman's Award

AT A CEREMONY TO RECOGNIZE THE STATE OFFICES IN THE CENTRAL FLORIDA AREA FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE 2005 FLORIDA STATE EMPLOYEE'S CHARITABLE CAMPAIGN, THE ORANGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECEIVED THE 2005 FSECC CHAIRMAN'S AWARD. The award was given for having the largest increase in contributions based on the number of employees in an organization. The award was accepted by the Orange CHD's FSECC campaign and community relations coordinator, Beverly Cook.

When asked what they did to increase their contributions, Cook said, "I cannot say exactly what contributed to the increase. I know that we had a dedicated coordinator at each of our health center locations and even though the only organized activity we had was a Krispy Kreme donut sale, they did a marvelous job." These individuals, Cook said, promoted the campaign and enthusiastically collected the pledge cards.

The health department's director, Dr. Kevin Sherin, encouraged staff participation, particularly since so many individuals were interested in giving to organizations that help victims of hurricanes. "Staff was reminded that they, or someone they know, may one day need the services of an organization that receives funds from this campaign," Cook continued. "I believe our approach was one that made people aware of the importance of giving and they were comfortable doing so without any pressure." ■

Dennis Penzell, D.O., wins chair recognition award

THE FLORIDA BOARD OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE AWARDED DENNIS PENZELL, D.O., ITS ANNUAL CHAIR RECOGNITION AWARD IN APRIL FOR HIS OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT AND SERVICE WITHIN THE OSTEOPATHIC PROFESSION.

"Dr. Penzell has been a champion and an advocate for the underprivileged populations of Hillsborough County for several years," said DOH Secretary M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D. "He is not only an outstanding physician but also an outstanding human being. Dr. Penzell is very deserving of this honor."

Dr. Penzell is the former medical director of Suncoast Community Health Centers in Hillsborough County. He was employed at the center for 20 years before resigning in January. Suncoast Community Health Centers are a network of four community health clinics that serve the indigent populations of east Hillsborough. Penzell is a native of New York. He left the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine to complete a four-year obligation to the National Health Service Corps and ended up dedicating two decades of his life to these underserved communities. ■

Board of Medicine selects two physicians for chair's recognition awards

ROY G. BASSETT, JR., M.D., D.D.S., AND S.K. RAO MUSUNURU, M.D., WERE RECENTLY RECOGNIZED AT A FLORIDA BOARD OF MEDICINE MEETING AS RECIPIENTS OF THE CHAIR'S RECOGNITION AWARD. PAST CHAIR GASTON ACOSTA-RUA, M.D., ESTABLISHED THE AWARD TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND PHYSICIANS WHO EXEMPLIFY OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND PUBLIC SERVICE.

Florida Board of Medicine Chair M.P. Zachariah, M.D., said, "The Board chose to commend Dr. Bassett and Dr. Musunuru for their outstanding contribution and services to the people of Florida and the medical profession."

While serving with Special Forces in Iraq, Dr. Bassett provided critical medical care to armed forces during two combat tours. Dr. Bassett is currently a board certified family physician with Holy Cross Medical Group in Ft. Lauderdale. He is also an instructor in the School of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University and an assistant clinical professor in the College of Osteopathic Medicine at Nova Southeastern University.

According to Dr. Zachariah, "Dr. Musunuru has worked tirelessly to educate Floridians about heart disease and to bring quality improvements in the treatment of heart disease." In 2005, Dr. Musunuru was recognized by a resolution of the Florida House of Representatives and named National Physician of the Year by the American Heart Association. He currently is the director of cardiology at the Heart Institute and chairman of continuing medical education at Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point in Hudson. ■

DOH senior pharmacist Sara Helen Lowe wins national distinguished service award

FLORIDA DOH SENIOR PHARMACIST SARA HELEN LOWE, R.PH., WAS SELECTED IN APRIL FOR THE LESTER E. HOSTO INSPECTOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOARDS OF PHARMACY (NABP). The Inspector Distinguished Service Award is named in memory of the association's former president. The award is the highest honor bestowed by the association.

Lowe has been employed with the department's Division of Medical Quality Assurance and Investigative Services' Board of Pharmacy for the past 15 years. Since 1990, she has ensured that pharmacies under her jurisdiction are operating within the laws and rules of Florida. Lowe often consults with local, state and federal criminal investigation units.

Before joining the board, Lowe was the director of pharmacy at several hospitals including the Capital Regional Medical Center, West Florida Hospital and the John R. Flippin Memorial Hospital. Lowe received her bachelor of science in pharmacy from the University of Mississippi. ■

Biomedical research advisory council receives six appointments

GOVERNOR JEB BUSH IN MARCH APPOINTED SIX INDIVIDUALS FROM ACROSS THE STATE TO THE BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL. The James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program (BRP) supports

biomedical research on prevention, diagnosis, treatments and cures for tobacco-related diseases. The council advises the Secretary of Health on the direction and scope of the research program with the majority of the positions appointed by the governor.

"We are proud to have such advanced medical research conducted in our state," said M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D. "The work that this council does impacts Floridians on many levels in terms of the early identification, analysis and treatment of diseases affecting citizens statewide. Their work is very important for the health of the state and I congratulate the appointees on their new positions."

The goals of the BRP as set by the Florida Legislature include:

- **Researching better prevention, diagnosis, treatments and cures of diseases related to tobacco use and thereby expanding the foundation of biomedical knowledge and improving the health of Floridians.**
- **Bringing the advances of biomedical research into the training of healthcare workers.**
- **Undertaking new initiatives in biomedical research that will attract additional funding and stimulate economic activity in areas related to biomedical research.**

The newly appointed members of the Biomedical Research Advisory Council include:

- **Dr. Nikolaus Gravenstein, of Gainesville. Seat: Biomedical Research**
- **Dr. Herbert Weissbach, of Boynton Beach. Seat: Biomedical Research**
- **Dr. Penny Ralston, of Tallahassee. Seat: Behavioral/ Social Research**
- **Dr. Mary Lou Sole, of Winter Park. Seat: Professional Medical Organization**
- **Dr. Myra Hurt, of Tallahassee. Seat: Research University**
- **Mr. Albert Latimer, of Altamonte Springs. Seat: General Population**

For more information about the Biomedical Research Program please visit its web site at <http://www.floridabiomed.com>. ■

the advisor

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Please send stories & information for the next issue by e-mail to Leslie Knight in the Office of Performance Improvement.

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DOH honored with dozens of Davis Productivity Awards

Individuals and teams received recognition

SEVENTY-EIGHT INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAVE BEEN HONORED WITH 2006 PRUDENTIAL FINANCIAL DAVIS PRODUCTIVITY AWARDS. These awards serve to recognize those individuals and teams whose diligent work has increased productivity, improved the delivery of state services by promoting innovation and saved money for Florida taxpayers and businesses.

"We are very proud of those who were recognized with these exciting and prestigious awards," said DOH Secretary M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D. "Their selfless service to the people of Florida has not gone unnoticed and we are very pleased with the quality work they do on a daily basis to carry out our department's noble mission."

DOH received recognition in all of the five categories: cash, plaques, certificates of commendation, honorable mention and sustained exemplary performance.

Prudential Financial is anchor sponsor of the awards program, which also receives sponsorship support from other individual, corporate and philanthropic entities. The Davis Productivity Awards reward individual state employees, teams, work units, partnerships and agencies that achieve or surpass the stringent criteria set for honorees.

To view the full list of 2006 award recipients, please visit the DOH Office of Performance Improvement's web site at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/hpi/davis/davis.html>. ■