

the health advisor

WHAT DO
SUPERHEROS
& TOBACCO
FREE FLORIDA
HAVE IN
COMMON?

The DOH
CHARTS
system helps
Florida
Communities

Learn more
about
meningococcal
disease

Living Healthy in Florida!

the health advisor

Official Newsletter of the Florida Department of Health
Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H., State Surgeon General

JULY/AUGUST 2008

National Health Observances

AUGUST

National Immunization Awareness Month

World Breastfeeding Week, 1-7

Upcoming Conferences

Florida Department of Health 2008 Minority Health Disparities Summit

The Florida Department of Health, Office of Minority Health will host the 2008 Minority Health Disparities Summit. This year's theme is "Bridging the Gap: Embracing Solutions to Eliminate Health Barriers."

The Summit will examine health barriers that contribute to health disparities. The goal of the Summit is to present solutions and/or interventions to these barriers to help bridge the health gap in Florida.

WHEN & WHERE: Aug. 13-Aug. 15; Grand Hyatt, Tampa Bay

FEATURED SPEAKERS: Dr. Kevin U. Stephens, Health Director, City of New Orleans; Dr. Gary Puckrein, Executive Director, National Minority Quality Forum; Dr. Richard A. Williams, founder of the Association of Black Cardiologists and The Minority Health Institute; and Dr. Adewale Troutman, Director, Louisville Metro Public Health.

REGISTRATION: Contact Sandi Fentress at Gulfcoast North AHEC at 813.929.1000 or sfentress@гнаhec.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact Cheryl Graham at Cheryl_graham@doh.state.fl.us or 850.245.4265.



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DOH MISSION: To PROMOTE, PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF ALL PEOPLE IN FLORIDA.

KIMBERLY A. BERFIELD, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF ADVOCACY AND POLICY

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SUPERHEROS and CYBERSPACE Unite to Prevent Tobacco Use among Florida Youth

submitted by the Tobacco Education and Use Prevention Program

Tobacco Free Florida aggressively targets the approximately 1.5 million youth 11–17 years old with the campaign’s cigarette and smokeless tobacco prevention message. The campaign includes youth-focused ads, in-school PSAs, a custom limited edition Justice League comic book, campaign sites on Facebook and MySpace, smoke-free songs and a YouTube video contest.

THERE IS JUSTICE! Recognizing the resurgence of comic book popularity among youth, the campaign has partnered with DC Comics—the largest English language publisher of comic books in the world—with “No Smoke Without Fire.” This custom comic book, set in Florida, features the Justice League Super Hero team of Superman, Batman, Robin, Wonder Woman, The Flash and Green Lantern. In the story DC Comics’ most popular characters destroy cigarette smoke-generating machines and save school-age children from mind-weakening, cherry-flavored cigarettes. The comic book was distributed to middle school students across Florida this past school year.

TEENS ONLINE As any parent knows, many teens use online chats, e-mail and discussion forums as a social outlet. The Tobacco Free Florida campaign created profile pages for the two largest social networks on the Web—Facebook and MySpace. In addition to reaching teens, these social networking Web sites are twice as likely to be popular among smokers 18–24 years old. Becoming a “fan” (Facebook) or a “friend” (MySpace) gives teens and young

adults the opportunity to be a part of the Tobacco Free Florida campaign by posting their comments and connecting with other campaign fans and friends.

DOWNLOAD SMOKE-FREE MUSIC Since more than half of teens download music online, the campaign created smoke-free songs. Teens can download free songs by non-smoking Florida bands like Maida Vale, Sarah Mac Band, The Twelfth Chapter, Jonny Diaz and Paul Clayton, from www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/smokefreesongs.

THE YOU CARE VIDEO CONTEST The campaign has also partnered with YouTube to sponsor the YouCare video contest where entrants share why they don’t smoke. YouTube users can vote for their favorite submission and a panel of judges will wrap up the contest by picking the grand prize winner who will receive an Apple iMac® computer and an iPod® touch. Reaching more than two million Comcast and Bright House Networks Digital Cable subscribers, the first ever statewide On-Demand channel devoted exclusively to the campaign will feature the top 50 videos.

SMOKELESS TOBACCO CAMPAIGN

UPDATE Because smokeless tobacco is another serious health issue for Florida’s youth, Tobacco Free Florida created a baseball card ad series depicting players Billy “Jawbreaker” Smith and “Silent” Evan Jackson. The ads highlight hard-hitting statistics: chew users are 50 times more likely to get cancer of the cheek and gums, and smokeless tobacco contains 28 cancer-



“Jawbreaker” Smith

causing chemicals and three times more nicotine than cigarettes! Look for the ads in *Sports Illustrated*, the *Florida High School Playbook* and other statewide publications.

Read the comic book, become a “fan” or a “friend,” download free music and enter a video contest—it’s all on

www.tobaccofreeflorida.com



“I’m getting my taste buds back. I can taste my food again, and it’s amazing how my house and car are beginning not to stink as bad.”

Mother and daughter Marsha and Andrea Casady celebrate completion of the smoking cessation program at Shands Eastside Community Practice clinic in Gainesville.

Area Health Education Center Network Tobacco Cessation Successes!

by John Van Gieson, Florida Area Health Education Center Network

Shortly after enrolling in a smoking cessation program at the University of Florida’s Eastside Community Practice clinic in Gainesville, mother and daughter Marsha and Andrea Casady realized they had the option of smoking a pack of cigarettes a day each or saving the money and taking a Caribbean cruise. They opted for the cruise. The Casadys haven’t scheduled the cruise yet—they are looking forward to going later this year—but they are enjoying the new lease on life they got by kicking the tobacco habit.

Of the six people who started the Suwannee River Area Health Education Center’s smoking cessation program, Marsha and Andrea were the only ones to complete the program. “It feels good,” Marsha said. “I’m getting my taste buds back. I can taste my food again, and it’s amazing how my house and car are beginning not to stink as bad.”

Working under a Florida Department of Health (DOH) contract, the Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Network offers cessation programs across the state and is nearing its goal of creating programs in all 67 counties. Free cessation groups meet for one hour a week for six weeks. Participants learn why smoking is bad, why they smoke, how to resist cravings to smoke, how to prevent relapses and how to adjust to a tobacco-free lifestyle. The Casadys also received nicotine patches as part of their program.

“There were some days that it was difficult, but you have

to decide what you want to do,” Marsha said. “Number one, you have to decide you want to quit smoking.”

“An estimated one of five adult Floridians smoke, and many of them would like to kick the habit, but don’t know where to turn,” said Dr. Arthur Fournier, president of the Florida AHEC Network. Dr. Fournier is director of the University of Miami AHEC Program and a professor at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. “AHEC cessation programs offered in communities all over Florida are the place for them to go to get the support they need to quit smoking.”

The AHEC Network is comprised of program offices at five Florida medical schools and 10 regional centers. Cessation programs include group counseling, individual sessions and referrals to the DOH toll-free, smoking cessation counseling “Quitline” (1-877-U-CAN NOW). Testimonials to the value of the cessation programs offered by the AHEC Centers are pouring in from all over the state.

“The group sessions are a big plus,” said Denise Harden, an employee of the Ocean Reef Club in Largo who completed a Florida Keys AHEC cessation program at work. “It makes quitting a lot less painful. My new friends made the climb to the top of the ‘non-smoking’ hill with me. It was six weeks well spent—I am a NON-SMOKER!”

For more information about AHEC Cessation programs, please visit www.atcat.net. Or contact John Van Gieson by e-mail or phone: john@vangiesonmedia.com, 850.681.6505.

Florida Students Take **First** and **Second** Place in the 2008 National Radon Poster Contest

by Jorge Laguna, Florida Radon Program

The National Radon Poster Contest, sponsored by the National Safety Council and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is an annual event for students 9–14 years old. Aiming to raise awareness about the harmful effects of elevated indoor radon levels, the contest goals include increasing the number of homes tested for radon and educating people about reducing radon levels at home. Last fall, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) Radon Program participated and Florida won!

The DOH Radon Program received 49 contest entries from across the state. The posters chosen for entry into the national contest were:

NATIONAL FIRST PLACE WINNER: “Science Sue Talks about Radon,” by Sara Garcia. Sara, 13 years old, attends the Hollywood Academy of Arts and Sciences in Hollywood.

NATIONAL SECOND PLACE WINNER: “Can Your House Pass the Test?” by Daniel Carr. Daniel, 11 years old, is home-schooled and lives in Tampa.

FLORIDA THIRD PLACE WINNER: “Ghost of Radon,” by Raimy Engel. Raimy, 14 years old, attends John Paul II Catholic High School in Tallahassee.

In December 2007, the winners for the official 2008 posters were chosen in Washington, D.C. Congratulations to national winners Sara Garcia and Daniel Carr—their posters are showcased on the National Safety Council Web site (www.nsc.org/resources/issues/radon/poster_winners.aspx).

The 2009 Contest

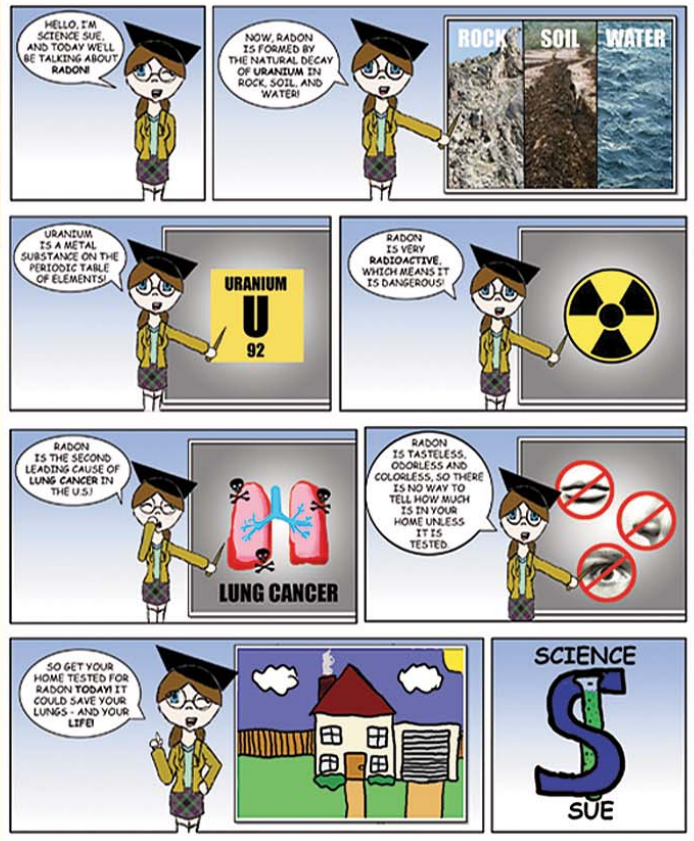
The DOH Radon Program will again coordinate the Florida portion of the National Radon Poster Contest. We invite schools to partner with DOH and encourage students to participate in this year’s contest. “The contest participants will help educate the public about radon, and provide their fellow Floridians with the knowledge to protect themselves from radon-induced lung cancer,” said Clark Eldredge, Environmental Administrator of the Division of Environmental Health, Radon Program.

DOH will accept posters from Sept. 1–Oct. 15, 2008 and announce the winners on Dec. 9, 2008. National poster winners will be unveiled at the awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., Jan. 2009.

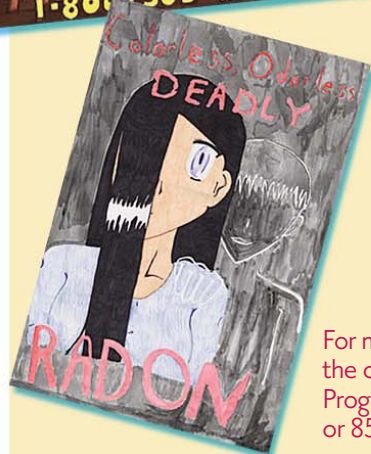
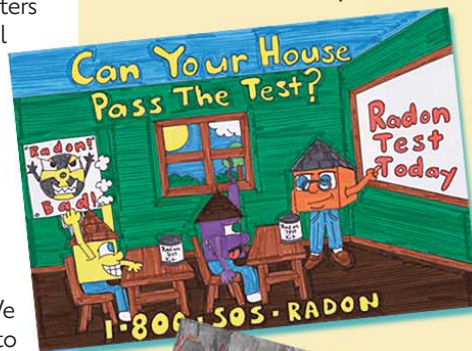
The first-place national winner, a parent, and teacher (or a sponsoring organization’s representative) wins an all-expense paid trip to the awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. The winning artwork’s message—reproduced on t-shirts, mouse pads, book marks and posters—will be distributed nationally in 2009.

Clark Eldredge contributed to this article.

Science Sue Talks About: RADON



ABOVE: “Science Sue Talks about Radon,” by Sara Garcia. BELOW, FROM TOP: “Can Your House Pass the Test?” by Daniel Carr and “Ghost of Radon,” by Raimy Engel.



More About Radon

Radon, a naturally occurring, radioactive gas, is the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking. Radon is colorless, odorless, and tasteless and causes approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths annually.

In Florida, radon problems have been found in every region of the state. There are elevated radon levels in single-story homes, schools, office buildings and as high up as the 24th floor of high-rise condominiums.

The only way to know if you are exposed to high radon levels is to have your home tested.

For more information about radon and the contest contact the DOH Radon Program: toll-free, 1.800.543.8279 or 850.245.4288.

New Resource for Citizens Working to Improve the Health of their Communities

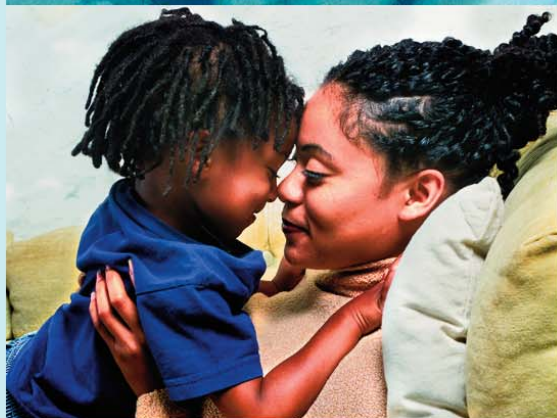
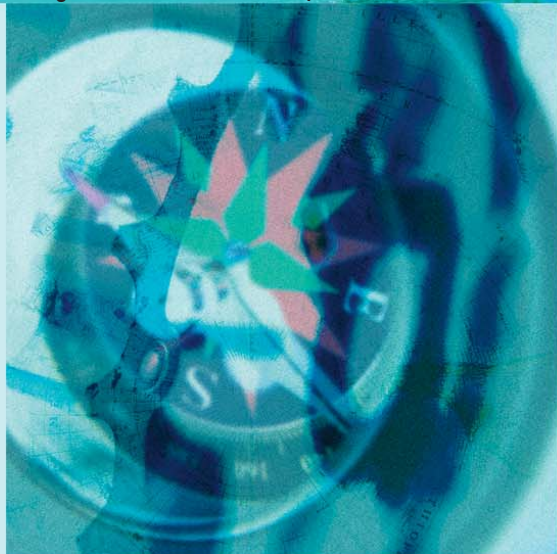
by Betty Serow, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Data Analysis

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) wants to help communities improve the health of their residents. As part of its COMPASS program, county “profiles” are developed for the DOH’s CHARTS system. The newest of these, the School-aged Child and Adolescent Profile, was released to the public just in time for the new school year—www.floridacharts.com/charts/SpecReport.aspx?RepID=1031552.

“Currently, communities may have to visit many different Web sites to locate information specific to child and adolescent populations or may even need to call state agencies for more information,” said Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros, Florida’s State Surgeon General. “The purpose of the School-aged Child and Adolescent Profile is to make this county-level data more readily available while encouraging communities to become aware of the environments in which these youth live.”

The School-aged Child and Adolescent Profile includes data about a variety of indicators: child abuse, including sexual abuse; modifiable behaviors such as smoking, diet, physical inactivity, teen sex, alcohol and drug use; motor vehicle crashes, injuries and deaths; homicide and suicide; referrals to the Department of Juvenile Justice; educational issues such as kindergarten readiness, promotion and graduation rates, absenteeism, suspensions and school violence. Each indicator in the profile includes absolute numbers, county rankings and state rates for comparison purposes.

This profile was developed jointly by the Departments of Education, Juvenile Justice, Highway Safety, Children and Families, and the Agency for Health Care Administration. It is designed to help concerned citizens, school boards, health departments, local government agencies, planning councils, coalitions and local not-for-profit organizations seeking funding to solve problems they have identified and to evaluate programs they put into place.



The Acronyms Defined

COMPASS (Comprehensive Assessment, Strategic Success) is the name of DOH’s community health improvement effort to help local groups interested in translating data into action. A survey conducted by DOH last year found that groups in 62 of Florida’s counties are participating in this effort. Local partnerships identify their own priority issues and decide what they need to do to make improvements in the health of their residents. Priorities include access to care, the built environment, and addressing obesity and physical activity across the lifespan. Activities have leveraged thousands of dollars in grant and foundation funding to support community change.

FloridaCHARTS (Community Health Assessment Resource Tool Set) is an online database containing over 400 county-level and statewide health statistics in graph, table, trend-line and map formats. An additional 80 new individual indicators have been added to FloridaCHARTS from this new profile. This easy-to-use tool is free and available to the public. Visit www.floridaCHARTS.com.



Back to School: Protect Yourself Against Meningococcal Disease

by Kate Goodin, M.P.H. and Janet Hamilton, M.P.H., Bureau of Epidemiology

What is meningococcal disease? Don't you mean meningitis?

Meningitis is an infection of the fluid of a person's spinal cord and the fluid that surrounds the brain.

Meningitis is usually caused by a viral or bacterial infection. Knowing whether meningitis is caused by a virus or bacterium is important because the severity of illness and the treatment differ. Viral meningitis is generally less severe and resolves without specific treatment, while bacterial meningitis can be quite severe and can be treated promptly with antibiotics.

Some people refer to illness caused by the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis* simply as meningitis, although not all meningitis illnesses are caused by the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*. Meningococcal disease is a category that contains several different types of illness caused by infection with the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*. The two most common types of illness are meningitis and meningococemia.

Symptoms of meningitis include: fever, intense headache, nausea, vomiting, stiff neck and an extreme sensitivity to light.

Meningococemia is a more invasive infection that affects more

areas of the body. The most common symptom is a diffuse rash that is more prominent on the back and belt line.

Both of these diseases can lead to death in up to 15 percent of cases. Even

though these diseases are serious, there are not many cases nationally or in Florida. In 2007, there were 67 cases of meningococcal disease in Florida. Meningococcal disease rates have been declining over the last 10 years (see Figure 1) and most cases occur in younger age groups (see Figure 2.)

Prompt diagnosis and treatment is vital. If symptoms occur, the patient should see a doctor immediately. Meningococcal disease can be treated with a number of effective antibiotics. It is important, however, that treatment be started early in the course of the disease. Meningitis caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* is contagious. The bacteria are spread through very close contact with respiratory and throat secretions. They are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningococcal disease has been.

What about prevention? Is there a vaccine?

Early diagnosis and treatment is very important. This is important for treating the individual and any people that are close contacts of the individual. People who have been in very close contact of a person with

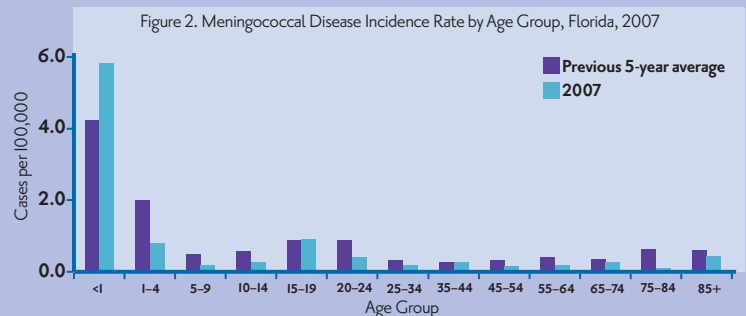
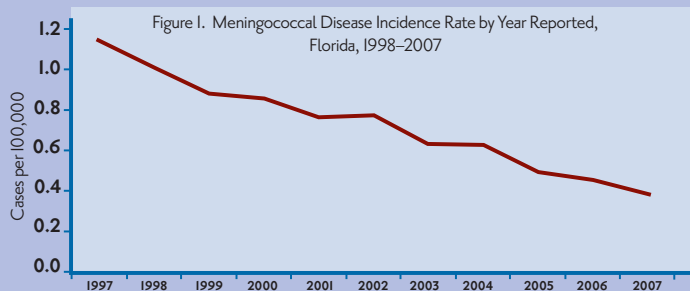
meningitis caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* should receive antibiotics to prevent them from getting the disease.

There is a vaccine available against four of the most predominant strains of meningococcal disease. One type of vaccine is known by the name Menomune and the other is Menactra. These vaccines work in slightly different ways but are both estimated to be about 85 percent effective. It is recommended to give the vaccine to adolescents between 11 and 12 years old.

At-risk groups

There are two groups that have been identified as being especially at risk: military recruits and college freshmen who live in dormitories. At Florida public universities, students planning to live in dormitories are required to show proof of vaccination against meningococcal disease or say that they have read information related to meningococcal disease and still do not want to be immunized. It is highly recommended for people in these special risk groups to be vaccinated, either through their primary physician or through their local student health services office—prevention of this disease is possible and vaccination is the first step!

Questions and comments can be directed to the Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology at 850.245.4401.



Florida Hosts the 2008 Annual Nurse Leader Conference

by Bonnie Gaughan-Bailey, Office of Public Health Nursing

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) Office of Public Health Nursing hosted the annual Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing (ASTDN) conference held May 2–6, 2008 in Orlando. Thirty states and the U.S. Virgin Islands were represented as well as academic institutions and the health care industry.

ASTDN is an active association of public health nursing leaders from across the United States that works to advance the public health nursing leadership role in protecting and promoting the health of the public. Nurse leaders help shape the future of nursing and health care through collaboration and innovation. Over 60 nurse leaders attended the conference.

On National Nurse's Day, May 6, the Acting U.S. Surgeon General, Rear Admiral Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H., made a

surprise appearance at the conference and congratulated nurse leaders on their special day. Surgeon General Galson acknowledged their dedication to high standards in nursing practice and encouraged them to work diligently in alleviating the nursing shortage crisis.

The conference included leadership discussions on nursing practice, projecting and impacting change, diversity and preparedness. DOH Deputy Secretary for Health and State Director of Public Health Nursing Jean Kline, R.N., B.S.N., M.P.H., shared information on nursing issues affecting Florida.

Glynnis LaRosa, B.S.N., M.P.H., State Nursing Director for the Massachusetts Department of Health and Sandra Schoenfisch, R.N., Ph.D., of DOH were conference co-chairs. "The conference was an excellent opportunity to learn from nationally recognized leaders and bring back new strategies that can be replicated in state public health agencies," said Schoenfisch, director of the DOH Office of Public Health Nursing and a voting member of ASTDN.

If you would like to learn more about public health nurse leaders visit www.ASTDN.org.

