

the health advisor

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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MISSION

To promote, protect, and improve the health of all people in Florida.

Health care providers, the goal of the *Health Advisor* is to present health information to your patients, clients, and community partners in a reader-friendly format. Pages are designed for posting or handouts. If there is a topic that you would like the *Health Advisor* to cover, contact us.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Angela Lynn
EDITOR AND DESIGNER Georgia Murphy

To submit an article, contact Georgia Murphy:
850.245.4444, ext. 2123; FAX, 850.488.6495; or
e-mail, georgia_murphy@doh.state.fl.us.

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Communities Putting Prevention to Work

Orange County Health Department Awarded 6.6 Million Dollars as Part of the Recovery Act Prevention and Wellness Initiative

by Dain Weister, Orange County Health Department

DURING A RECENT TELEVISED PRESS CONFERENCE VIA SATELLITE, the Orange County Health Department (CHD) was recognized by the U.S. secretary for Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, and the U.S. surgeon general, Dr. Regina M. Benjamin, as one of the recipients of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative. This initiative, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, awarded \$372.8 million dollars to 44 communities—including cities, towns, and tribes—around the nation. These communities received the award to implement policy, systems, and environmental change strategies over the next two years. The Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative helps support public health efforts to reduce obesity, increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and decrease smoking—four critical actions for combating chronic diseases and promoting health. The Orange CHD is proud to be a recipient of this grant and thanks our state surgeon general, Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros, for her support when the grant awards were announced nationwide.



Left to right: Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros, state surgeon general; Dr. Regina M. Benjamin, U.S. surgeon general; Dr. Kevin M. Sherin, Orange CHD director; Lesli Ahonkhai, Orange CHD Health Protection bureau chief; and Dr. Yolanda Martinez, Orange CHD Office of Community Health program manager.

Tobacco-related diseases hit Florida hard

An estimated 81 Floridians die every day due to tobacco-related diseases. The answers, in part, lie in tobacco prevention programs. With Recovery Act dollars, the Orange CHD will implement the Orange County Health Improvement Project (O-CHIP) which will build upon existing successful community partnerships to improve the health of Central Florida residents and to help prevent deaths associated with smoking and second-hand smoke. Staff will be hired to work with the Orange County Tobacco Free Partnership to carry out policy changes and partner with key community agencies such as the American Lung Association, Orange County Public Schools, the Center for Multicultural Wellness and Prevention, as well as county and city governments.

The O-CHIP project is designed to change social norms and positively impact Orange County communities, particularly those experiencing health disparities. The project will expand smoke-free environments to cover all of Orange County and its

municipal parks; reduce youth access to tobacco; launch a media campaign to support tobacco prevention and cessation policies; and provide greater access to smoking cessation programs. The project will also encourage health care providers to take advantage of the Ask, Advise, Refer program as part of a tobacco-use assessment for their patients.

For more information on Orange CHD tobacco prevention efforts, contact Dr. Yolanda Martinez at 407.858.1400.



Medications Can Help But They Can Also Hurt

What are you doing to prevent medication poisoning in your home?

submitted by the Orange County Health Department

In 2008, poisoning was the leading cause of injury-related death for Floridians. Approximately 78 percent of these poisoning deaths were unintentional and, although children are highly at risk, the majority of fatal poisonings occurs in teens, young adults, and adults. In recent years, a growing number of fatal poisonings are a result of the misuse and abuse of medications.

The Orange County Health Department's (CHD) Office of Community Health-Injury Prevention Program has launched the Because I Care campaign to raise awareness about medication poisonings and to provide information on how to prevent these poisonings. One of the most important actions you can take is to throw out old and unneeded medications.

Do your part and prevent medication poisoning. Medications in your home should be stored in a place inaccessible to children and visitors. Don't share prescription drugs, and dispose of unneeded or expired medications quickly and properly.

For more information on medication poisoning prevention and the Because I Care campaign, call 407.858.1462.

Steps for Throwing Out Medication



Step 1. If possible, do NOT flush medication. Leave it in its original container and remove your personal information from the bottle. Mix the medication with an undesirable substance such as brewed coffee with coffee grounds—make sure pills dissolve. Or mix liquid medications with kitty litter.



Step 2. Seal the container with tape, place it in a bag, and seal the bag.

Step 3. Hide the container in the trash. Make sure the medication is not easily accessible or visible to others.





Newborn Screening Results Now Easier than Ever!



submitted by the CMS
Newborn Screening Program

Newborn screening is an important part of a child's first few days of life.

With just a small blood spot, the Florida state lab can test for 34 different metabolic and genetic disorders and provide children an opportunity to have a healthier future.

The Newborn Screening Program at the Florida Department of Health understands that information from this screening should be integrated into a child's individual health care plan as part of their medical home. To provide a more coordinated system of care, the Florida Newborn Screening Program created a new web-based system to help physicians easily access their patient's newborn screening results.

With the Florida Newborn Screening Results (FNSR) application, physicians register once and can get a copy of a baby's results online anytime. If a baby changes doctors, or if a doctor isn't selected at the time of a baby's birth, the physician can just go online to access the lab report the same day.

Over 1,100 successful searches are done each week.

Currently, the system holds six months of lab reports and close to 150,000 individual reports total. Reports for babies born more than six months ago must still be requested via fax through the Children's Medical Services Newborn Screening Follow-Up Program at 850.922.5385.

With over 1,400 physicians currently registered, physicians say FNSR helps them save time and provide better overall care for their patients. Next, the Newborn Screening Program would like to register hospital personnel from the 118 birthing hospitals statewide.

If you are interested in accessing newborn screening results online and would like to register for the Florida Newborn Screening Results system, visit <https://www.fnsr.net/>.

More information about newborn screening can be found on www.cms-kids.com or www.doh.state.fl.us/cms/nbscreen-physicians.html.



The TTY or TDD stands for Text Teletype or Telecommunications Device for the Deaf. A user can send and receive typewritten messages to and from other TTY users and through the Florida Relay service.

EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE THROUGH FTRI



Phones that amplify incoming sound.



Devices that alert you when the phone rings.



Captioned telephones.



Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf (TDD/TTY).



Braille TTY for deaf-blind individuals.



Phones that amplify outgoing speech.

Communication Freedom

Free Telephones for Florida's Deaf and Hearing Impaired

by Colleen Schuster, Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.

FLORIDA HAS NEARLY THREE MILLION DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING RESIDENTS—the second highest percentage out of all the states in the U.S. For the deaf and hard of hearing, the simple task of making a phone call can be a frustrating experience. But it doesn't have to be.

In 1991, the Florida Legislature passed the Telecommunications Access Act (TASA) to make basic telecommunications accessible and affordable for hard-of-hearing, deaf, speech impaired, and deaf-blind persons. The Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI), a non-profit organization, was created to administer TASA and provide specialized telecommunications equipment at no cost to qualified Florida residents. The program is funded through a monthly 11 cent surcharge on all telephone landlines.

Amplified phones for the hard of hearing are the most frequently distributed equipment—not surprising due to Florida's large senior population.

Certifying agents play a key role

To receive a phone or specialized equipment, applicants must be a permanent Florida resident, age 3 or older, and certified as hard of hearing, deaf, deaf-blind, or speech impaired. A certifying agent is defined as a:

- Licensed physician
- Audiologist
- Appropriate state or federal agency representative
- Deaf service center director
- Hearing aid specialist
- State-certified teacher of the hearing impaired or the visually impaired

Audiologists, physicians, and hearing aid specialists are prime referral sources to the program and as certifiers are encouraged to become part of FTRI's Service Provider program. Service providers are supplied with FTRI program brochures and applications.

FTRI also contracts with 23 non-profit organizations statewide to serve as regional distribution centers (RDCs) to conduct outreach and distribute equipment in the areas they serve. They actively seek presentation and distribution opportunities as well as secure service provider participation in the program.

If you would like more information about the Service Provider program, contact your nearest RDC by clicking on www.ftri.org, or call FTRI at 1.800.222.3448 (voice) or 888.447.5620 (TTY). Applications are also available online.



Sarasota County Health Department Green Team members, along with Sarasota County's sustainability instructors, attended the Green Champion reception and proclamation presentation by the Sarasota County Commission.

THE SARASOTA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (CHD) has been designated a Sarasota County Green Business Partner. The Sarasota County Green Business Partnership encourages environmental stewardship and recognizes work sites in Sarasota County that make an extra effort to operate in an environmentally responsible manner. The partnership includes a Green Business Pledge by the Sarasota CHD to “. . .demonstrate environmental stewardship. . .by taking sustainable actions. . .and managing an environmentally responsible business. . .”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, going green reduces greenhouse gases released into the environment by burning fossil fuels and decomposing waste—scientists think greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are a primary contributor to global climate change. Climate change can produce severe weather, floods, and heat waves that injure people or make them sick.

Greenhouse gases in the air can also interact with sunlight and create ozone. Ozone along with soot particles from burning fossil fuels, called “particulate matter,” are two of the main things in polluted air that can cause people to have breathing problems like asthma. So when we go green to reduce greenhouse gases released into the environment, we are helping avoid the harmful health effects related to climate change and air pollution.

Sarasota County Health Department Gets the Thumbs Up for Going Green

submitted by the Sarasota County Health Department

Because going green contributes to a healthier community, the Sarasota CHD's Green Team championed the application process and gathered information and evaluated existing initiatives. The application process was streamlined and supported by the efforts of Sarasota CHD facilities maintenance staff Jeff Yoder, Scott Michael, and Alex Silva. Yoder, Michael, and Silva continue to find and evaluate areas of improvement in the building at 2200 Ringling Blvd. for resource conservation.

The Sarasota Green Business Partnership is a collaborative effort that includes businesses, business organizations, and local governments. Initiated through a grant awarded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the partnership now has more than 95 local members in Sarasota County. Additional information about the Sarasota Green Business Partnership can be found at www.scgov.net/GreenBusiness.

The CDC recommends that to go green and live green, you should remember the three Rs:

1—REDUCE greenhouse gases in the environment.

2—REUSE products.

3—RECYCLE items that can no longer be used.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/Features/GoingGreen/

by Philip E. Reichert,
Bureau of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis



In May 19, 2010, the U.S. recognized the third World Hepatitis Day (WHD). The 2009 theme of “Am I Number 12?” has been changed to “This is hepatitis. . .” for the 2010 observance. The World Hepatitis Alliance, which promotes WHD each year, wants everyone to be aware that over 500 million (1 out of every 12) people worldwide are infected with viral hepatitis. It does not matter your age, gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, anyone can become infected.

In 2010, the Hepatitis Prevention Program—a part of the Florida Department of Health—observes its tenth anniversary as a program created to prevent viral hepatitis in Florida. The Hepatitis Prevention Program will showcase several of its accomplishments throughout the month of May—National Hepatitis Awareness Month.

In Florida, nearly 300,000 individuals are infected with chronic hepatitis C and another 75,000 with chronic hepatitis B. Both hepatitis A and hepatitis B are vaccine preventable. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C, and most people are not aware of their infection because it may take years, even decades, for symptoms to develop.

The word hepatitis is a term meaning “inflammation of the liver.” Hepatitis A, B, and C (and even D and E) are all different forms of viral liver disease. Hepatitis A is often a food-borne illness because it is transmitted through the fecal-oral route. Infection can occur when infected

World Hepatitis Day

VIRAL HEPATITIS IS PREVENTABLE:

Wash your hands often & well.

Don't have sexual contact with infected individuals.

If you have sex, use a latex condom properly.

Don't use drugs.

Don't share needles & syringes with anyone.

Get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B.



people do not wash their hands properly before preparing food for others. Most hepatitis A outbreaks occur in restaurants or gatherings where food has been served, and in daycare centers and nursing homes where infected workers do not wash their hands between diaper changes and food preparation.

Hepatitis B is usually transmitted by direct contact with the blood of an infected individual or through sexual contact. The number of hepatitis B cases in the U.S. has declined dramatically in the past two decades because nearly all infants and children have been vaccinated against the disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Hepatitis Prevention Program have worked to vaccinate at-risk adults in recent years (most Americans and Floridians under the age of 25 years are protected against hepatitis B).

Hepatitis C is a blood-borne infection transmitted most often through needle sharing associated with drug abuse. Although hepatitis C may be transmitted through some types of sexual contact, it is usually not a sexually transmitted

infection. Individuals recently diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C were generally infected ten, twenty, or even thirty years ago due to past needle sharing or blood transfusions before the blood screening test was available (before June 1992).

After years of infection with hepatitis C, a person may develop cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver and eventually liver cancer. Without a liver transplant—a difficult prospect since thousands more people need livers compared to what's available—these infected people may die. Hepatitis C is curable in many but not all infected people. Treatment takes a year or longer of weekly injections and oral medication.

The Hepatitis Prevention Program does not have funding for hepatitis C treatment but does offer testing and hepatitis A and B vaccine at county health departments. Information on hepatitis prevention is also available. To learn more, visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis or www.FlaHepatitis.org. For information on World Hepatitis Day, go to www.amInumber12.org.



Face It Florida

submitted by the Office of Communications and Program Marketing

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S (DOH) BUREAU OF STD PREVENTION AND CONTROL has launched a new Web site called Florida's Access to Comprehensive Education using Internet Technology, or FACE IT for short. The launch coincided with the first day of STD Awareness Month—April. The Web site specifically targets high-risk groups that will benefit from tailored advice to protect their health. In 2009, Florida provisionally reported nearly 97,500 cases of sexually transmitted infections. Additionally, during 2009, roughly 12,083 pregnant women were diagnosed with either syphilis, HIV, gonorrhea, or chlamydia.

FaceitFlorida.com, a Web-Automated Human Interaction (wahi) Web site, encourages healthy behaviors through general information seeking. A wahi is an interactive program that allows users to dialogue with human images to simulate a real conversation. Based on the user's response to questions asked by the image, messages about prevention and treatment are delivered.

"The education provided by the Web site encourages users to reflect on and reconsider the individual actions that place them at risk for an STD. The chain of infection must be broken in order to protect the health of individuals and promote well-being in the greater community. The wahi Web site will help in our efforts to break that chain," says Karla Schmitt, chief, Bureau of STD Prevention and Control.

Most STDs can be easily diagnosed and treated, but they often have no symptoms and go undetected. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that STDs cost the United States health care system as much as \$15.9 billion annually. The Bureau of STD Prevention and Control emphasizes the importance of talking with health care providers and testing according to CDC guidelines.

DOH provides confidential counseling, testing, treatment, and education. For more information, visit the DOH Bureau of STD Prevention and Control's Web site at www.doh.state.fl.us/Disease_ctrl/std/index.html.

USE THE 3Ts TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF STDs:

TALK

Talk to your partner and your health care provider about risk factors, safer sex methods, and testing.

TEST

Make an appointment for STD testing.

TREAT

Treat the disease and avoid additional health problems.

FACE IT FLORIDA

Tobacco Free Florida Announces New Web Site For Quitters

submitted by the Bureau of Tobacco Prevention Program

Tobacco Free Florida has launched a new Web site, QuitTeam.com—a powerful resource for those trying to overcome their tobacco addiction.

QuitTeam.com provides tobacco users with a unique support system that uses popular social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook.

With QuitTeam.com you can choose from three options—Facebook, Twitter, or e-mail—to record your progress. Enter your successes and challenges, and any personal thoughts or feelings into your journal, then select the friends and family who will track your progress by reading your journal.

The site is designed to be a user-friendly, social-networking site where tobacco users can receive motivation from friends and family. Sharing progress via Twitter, Facebook or blogs, may provide incentive and accountability for tobacco users to break the cycle of addiction and enjoy a more healthful lifestyle. According to the American Cancer Society, support from friends and family greatly increases a tobacco user's chances of quitting.

The Florida Quitline offers free nicotine replacement therapies and counseling to Florida residents. For more information on the Quitline, please call 1.877.U.CAN.NOW.

If you are ready to take the next step and be free from tobacco, please visit www.QuitTeam.com.

Summer is almost here and protecting yourself from skin cancer on these sunny Florida days can be easy.

According to Florida's statewide cancer registry, the Florida Cancer Data System, the most current data available (2007) show a total of 4,190 new cases and 691 deaths attributed to melanoma of the skin.

Protecting your skin from harmful ultraviolet rays can reduce your risk for skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that about 65–90 percent of melanomas are caused by exposure to ultraviolet light.

There is no such thing as a healthy or safe tan. The International Agency for Research on Cancer, which is affiliated with the World Health Organization, states that people under age 30 who use tanning machines increase their risk of skin cancer by 75 percent.

May is National Skin Cancer Awareness Month, and now is the perfect time to start gearing up for summer fun and protect your skin.

Simple steps you can take to protect yourself:

- Avoid sun burns and tanning.
- Limit sun exposure between 10 a.m.–4 p.m., even on cloudy days.
- Wear a hat to protect your face, scalp, ears, and neck.
- Apply and reapply sunscreen liberally, and use a sunscreen with at least a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.
- Wear sunglasses.
- Don't use tanning beds.

Avoid Skin Cancer —Stay Safe in the Sun

submitted by the
Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention
and Health Promotion

