

the health advisor

DOH Mission:

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

March/April 2007

Office of Performance Improvement

Florida Loses Public Health Advocate

Wilson T. Sowder, M.D., M.P.H., passed away on February 16, 2007. Dr. Sowder retired from public service in 1974 after serving 30 years as an advocate for public health in Florida. He began his illustrious career when he was ordered to Pensacola by the secretary of the navy to serve as venereal disease control officer in order to bring the rampant venereal disease outbreak under control and close the "red-light" district. He received minimal help from local authorities and was driven to the point of posting signs that stated: "Syphilis. Keep Out." on houses of ill repute.

After serving in various leadership positions throughout Florida, Dr. Sowder was appointed as the state health officer in 1945. Throughout his tenure, the board of health established county health departments in each of Florida's 67 counties. He instituted programs in water and air pollution control, radiation surveillance, mosquito control, chronic disease, hospitalization for the indigent and mental health. The system he initiated to link the county health departments allows the state of Florida to have a high degree of coordination when emergencies strike.

In addition to his work for the state, Dr. Sowder also served as a consultant to the U.S. Foreign Operations Administration in Columbia, Panama and Ecuador in 1954; an advisor to the U.S. Health Delegation to the 13th World Health Assembly in 1960; and as a consultant to the government of Ecuador in 1963, when it established a Ministry of Health under the U.S. Department of State. Dr. Sowder was granted a 15-month leave of absence from his duties as state health officer to establish the Office of Aging in the U.S. Public Health Service at the request of the U.S. Surgeon General.

Under Dr. Sowder's leadership, Florida realized a decreased occurrence of many diseases through prevention and treatment, eradicating some diseases, such as polio, completely. His work increased the life spans of all Floridians and improved both infant and maternal mortality rates during childbirth. Dr. Sowder made a positive impact on the health of all Floridians and created the system that continues to provide health care throughout Florida. ■

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Department of Health Welcomes New Secretary

Ana M. Viamonte Ros M.D., M.P.H., was named secretary of the Florida Department of Health (DOH) and Florida's first surgeon general by Governor Charlie Crist in January 2007. She is the first woman and the first Cuban American to hold this position.

Secretary Viamonte Ros is dedicated to advancing the DOH's vision of ensuring all Floridians are healthy, safe and well. She is committed to advocating for better health care in Florida, making the healthcare system more user-friendly, promoting healthy habits among Florida's youth, preparing the state for any type of disaster, reducing health disparities and leading Floridians to better health by example.

In 1960, her family fled Cuba. Having come from a family of refugees, she understands the struggles of Floridians and is passionate about ensuring that public health programs help Floridians achieve a higher quality of life.

Secretary Viamonte Ros earned her medical degree in 1983 from the University of Miami School of Medicine, graduating with several awards and honors. She attended residency training in radiology at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida and the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, D.C.

In 2005, Secretary Viamonte Ros received her Master of Public Health degree, with a concentration on family and community health, from the Harvard School of Public Health. There, she was also the recipient of the Gareth Green Award for Excellence in Public Health, the highest student award.

She came to the department from Armor Correctional Health Services, where she worked to organize and monitor the delivery services in Florida's correctional institutions and also oversaw the development of medical discharge programs. In her role, Secretary Viamonte Ros traveled with a team of medical professionals to the Dominican Republic to help prevent the spread of HIV among inmates by conducting rapid HIV testing and offering support.

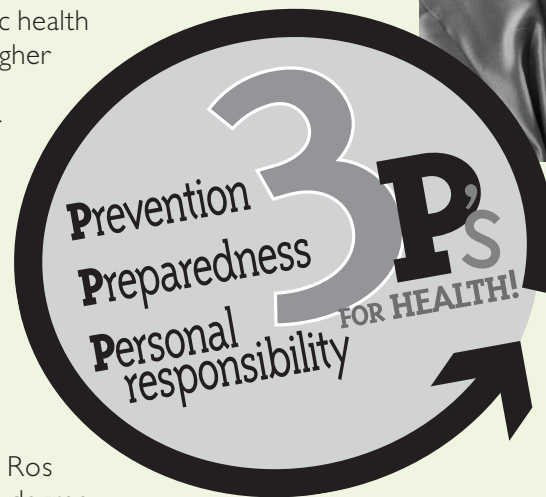
Secretary Viamonte Ros remains committed to advancing healthcare delivery systems in public health settings and has volunteered with programs like the Camillus House Homeless Initiative in Miami, the Health through Walls International Health Outreach, and the Brookside Community Health Center in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. Throughout all her community volunteer projects, she has been a strong advocate for disadvantaged individuals and minority communities.

She has written several articles in the areas of mental health, radiology and family health, in addition to lecturing at numerous healthcare symposia.

Secretary Viamonte Ros is the mother of two grown children. ■



Ana M. Viamonte Ros M.D., M.P.H.



To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Department of Health, the secretary has formed the "Three P's Tour" to promote prevention, preparedness and personal responsibility. She will visit all 67 county health departments in Florida over the next year. She will also visit schools to promote healthy behaviors in the next generation of Floridians. The tour had its first official visit on April 4 when the secretary visited the groundbreaking for the new facility for the Walton County Health Department. Updates of the tour will be featured in future issues of the Health Advisor.

Stop! In the Name of Your Heart!

The Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, in partnership with the department's marketing team located in the Office of Performance Improvement, launched a two-month radio campaign in honor of Heart Disease Awareness Month. The radio campaign ran January 1 through the end of February. The purpose of the campaign was to educate the at-risk population that is often unaware of the signs and symptoms of a heart attack or stroke, most often people over age 35. The radio spots call attention to the signs and symptoms of heart attacks and strokes and the importance of calling 911 immediately. The ads create a sense of urgency to call 911 as listeners are warned not to ignore their symptoms because of fear of embarrassment over a possible false alarm.

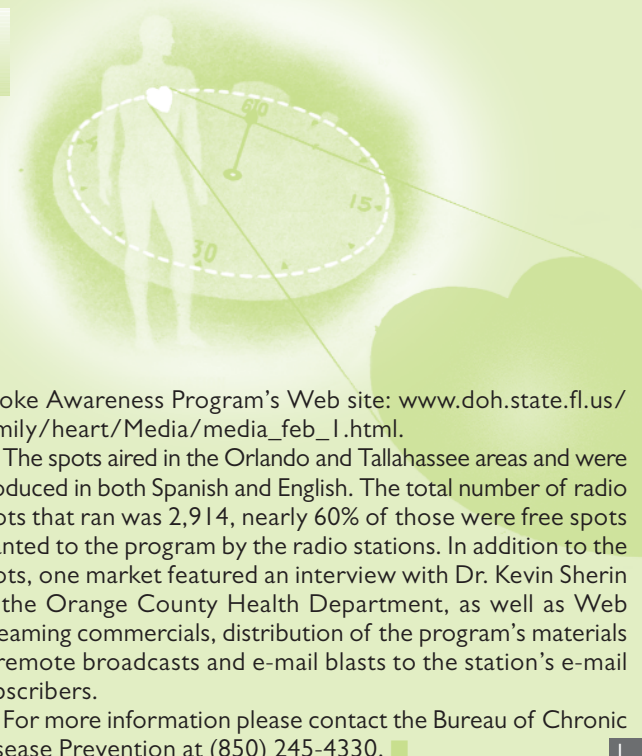
The spots, entitled "Fishing Trip" and "Another Birthday," separately depict a grandfather and a grandmother participating in normal family situations—such as a fishing trip or attending a birthday party—when they begin to describe the symptoms they feel as they suffer through a heart attack. The descriptions of their symptoms and how they differ between genders urge the listener to recognize those signs as they occur and not delay calling 911 immediately.

The radio spots can be accessed on the Heart Disease and

Stroke Awareness Program's Web site: www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/heart/Media/media_feb_1.html.

The spots aired in the Orlando and Tallahassee areas and were produced in both Spanish and English. The total number of radio spots that ran was 2,914, nearly 60% of those were free spots granted to the program by the radio stations. In addition to the spots, one market featured an interview with Dr. Kevin Sherin of the Orange County Health Department, as well as Web streaming commercials, distribution of the program's materials at remote broadcasts and e-mail blasts to the station's e-mail subscribers.

For more information please contact the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention at (850) 245-4330. ■





Volusia County Health Department

Volusia CHD Still Standing

The Volusia County Health Department (VCHD) has temporarily relocated its health services and programs following a devastating tornado that destroyed its 37,000-square-foot facility in DeLand.

"This is a testament to our caring community partners who responded immediately to our needs by offering space and making our transition as easy as possible," said Thomas R. Coleman, M.D., M.S., director of the Volusia County Health Department. "We also received an outpouring of offers of support from other health departments around the state as the DOH family reached out to assist us in our greatest time of need."

On Friday, February 2, a powerful tornado made an unexpected stop at the health department's DeLand clinic. The storm ripped down the roof, knocked down the walls, smashed the windows, broke a water main and left a huge, wet mess behind. Storm damage was so severe in the area that Governor Charlie Crist declared a state of emergency.

This was devastating news to the thousands of patients who visit the clinic on a regular basis for health care. It was also a tremendous blow to the dedicated healthcare workers who were fond of working at the DeLand clinic. "We were shocked to see our clinic destroyed, but we are so thankful that the storm hit while we were closed which meant no injuries or deaths," said Nawja Worthen, WIC and nutrition services manager. "Only the strong survive—and we are survivors."

The health department announced the temporary relocations of the following:

- Primary Care and Pharmacy
- Women's Health Services
- WIC and Nutrition
- Environmental Health
- Print Shop

To survey the damage and boost morale, DOH Secretary Ana Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H. and DOH Deputy Health Secretary Jean Kline made a brief visit to Volusia County Health Department staff impacted by the February tornado.

"I thank the entire Volusia County Health Department team and the many community partners who worked around the clock to ensure the people of Volusia County continued to receive health services," said Dr. Viamonte Ros. "I remain in awe of everything this community has accomplished. This is a great example of what can be done when everyone rolls up their sleeves and works together."

see **STANDING** back cover

Special thanks to our community partners: Florida Department of Health, Florida Hospital Fish Memorial, Florida Hospital Deland, Volusia County Government, West Volusia Hospital Authority, City of DeLand, VOTRAN, Pierson Medical Center, Head Start.



BRFSS calling? Stay on the line for a healthier Florida!

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is conducting a yearlong survey to collect information about health behaviors and conditions to further improve the health and safety of Floridians. The behavioral risk factor surveillance system (BRFSS) survey is an anonymous, random telephone survey of thousands of Florida adults (18 years and older) throughout the state.

"We have always looked to this survey as a tool to enhance our surveillance and as a way to assess the health needs of the state," said Secretary Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H. "I urge those individuals contacted through this survey to take it seriously and allow us to expand our understanding of Florida's health."

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Secretary Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.

The survey focuses on a wide range of health issues including, but not limited to: physical activity, diet, tobacco and alcohol use, HIV/AIDS prevention, asthma, diabetes and cancer screenings. DOH uses information from the BRFSS survey to identify groups who are at highest risk for illness, disability and premature death to set health program and policy priorities. If you are contacted to complete the survey, your participation is vital to helping the DOH gather information that will represent all Floridians.

About the telephone interview:

- Home telephone numbers are selected at random.
- Most phone calls will be made in the evenings or during the weekends.
- The "Do Not Call" lists do not apply because this is a legitimate health survey and not a solicitation.
- Households will be called multiple times to try to reach eligible respondents.
- You will not be asked for personal information such as your social security number or home address.
- You can skip any question that you do not want to answer because you feel it is a sensitive issue.
- It may take up to 15 to 20 minutes to complete the interview.

The Department of Health has conducted the BRFSS survey in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) since 1986. For more information about the BRFSS, please visit the CDC's Web site at www.cdc.gov/brfss, and the DOH Web site at www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/brfss.

MRSA

An Antibiotic-Resistant Infection

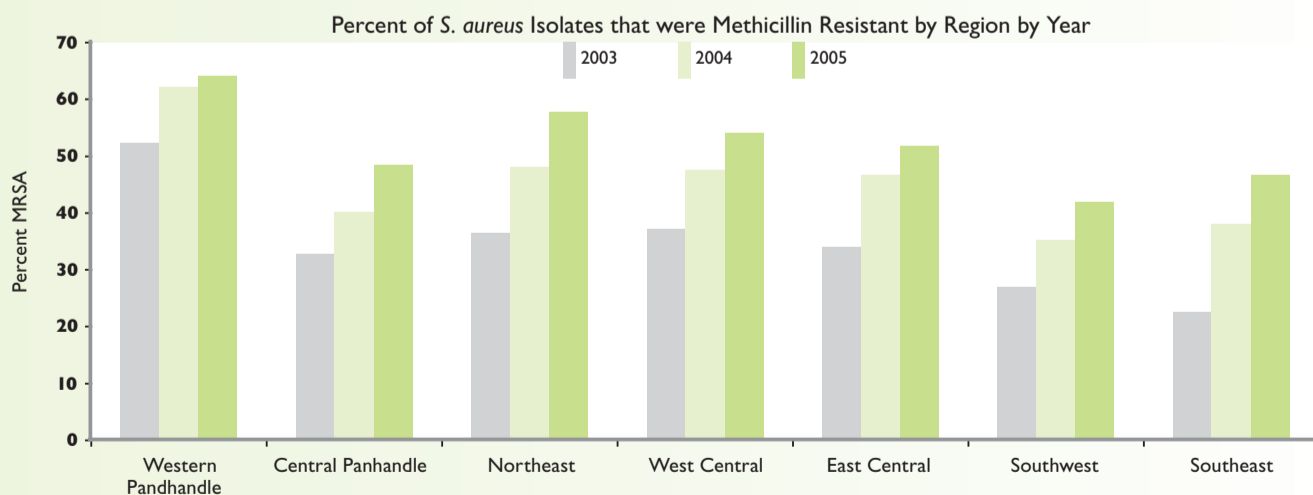
Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a type of staph bacteria resistant to common antibiotics such as penicillins and methicillin, which were once effective and commonly used for treatment. In 2006, the

Florida Department of Health conducted a study that showed an increase of MRSA skin infections from 37 percent in 2003 to 53 percent in 2005.

Staph and MRSA can be found in the nose and on the skin of healthy people. MRSA frequently causes skin infections, however it can cause more serious infections such as bloodstream, joint and surgical wound infections, as well as pneumonia. Staph bacteria and MRSA skin infections may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, have drainage or pus, and can be painful.

Staph and MRSA spread easily on contaminated hands, skin and objects, so follow some simple steps to prevent their spread and if you have an infection: wash hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand gel; avoid sharing personal items such as towels and razors; always keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed; and avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.

Pay attention to minor skin problems like pimples, insect bites, cuts and scrapes. If a wound becomes infected, see your physician and ask about MRSA.



2007 Abstinence Youth Rallies and Educator Training Workshops Kick-off

The Department of Health Abstinence Education Program will host a statewide series of "It's Great to Wait" youth rallies in May and June. The rallies are a cornerstone of the program's statewide community outreach efforts to raise awareness and provide teens the resources and empowerment necessary to say no to sex. The rallies will showcase motivational speakers, games and live music to keep the atmosphere fun and upbeat. "Da Band—No Sex" will be returning as one of the featured performers. Youth will also participate and compete for prizes in the "Abstinence Idol" talent contest.

Concurrent workshops will be held during the rallies to provide parents and guardians with communication skills and techniques to support their children in making healthy choices in their decision to be abstinent. On the Friday preceding each youth rally a day-long workshop is hosted, at no cost, for individuals and organizations wanting to learn how to teach abstinence education in their local communities.

To encourage rally attendance, the Abstinence Education Program implemented a direct mail campaign targeting 100,000 households with children between the ages of 13 and 15 and nearly 50,000 youth organizations from across the state. The program is hoping to build on the momentum generated by its general radio, television and print campaign launched in March and scheduled to run through May. The radio and television spots were created with the marketing team in the Office of Performance Improvement along with Group 5 Advertising. They were produced as testimonial style one-on-one interviews where four teenagers relate the consequences of their decision not to wait.

Adding broader context to this year's youth rallies and educator training workshops is the 2007 National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Day on May 2. According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (2004), Florida ranks fourth in the nation in pregnancies to adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age. The program has produced radio spots that focus solely on the teen pregnancy message in an effort to raise awareness of this startling statistic. The spots will air one week prior to National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Day, running alongside the rally promoting spots.

The Abstinence Education Program invites you, your teens and tweens to register for one of the upcoming rallies located in Tampa, Orlando, Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Pensacola and Ft. Lauderdale. For more information on the Abstinence Education Program or to register for an upcoming rally or educator training workshop visit the program's newly enhanced Web site at www.greattowait.com. ■



YOUTH RALLIES, PARENT WORKSHOPS AND EDUCATOR TRAININGS

TAMPA

Educator Training: Friday, May 4, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Youth Rally and Parent Workshop: Saturday, May 5, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

ORLANDO

Educator Training: Friday, May 11, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Youth Rally and Parent Workshop: Saturday, May 12, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

TALLAHASSEE

Educator Training: Friday, May 18, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Youth Rally and Parent Workshop: Saturday, May 19, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

JACKSONVILLE

Educator Training: Friday, June 1, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Youth Rally and Parent Workshop: Saturday, June 2, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

PENSACOLA

Educator Training: Friday, June 8, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Youth Rally and Parent Workshop: Saturday, June 9, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

FT. LAUDERDALE

Educator Training: Friday, June 15, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Youth Rally and Parent Workshop: Saturday, June 16, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Stepping up, Stepping Out

"Step Up, Florida! On Our Way to Healthy Living!" is an annual statewide initiative promoting regular physical activity and healthy lifestyles for all Floridians.

The campaign highlights local and state level opportunities for people of all abilities to be physically active. This initiative started in 2004 reaching over 13,000 participants across 37 counties. Since its inception, Step Up, Florida!, has seen continued growth and in 2006 reached over 200,000 participants in all 67 counties with the message of the importance of daily physical activity.

The 2007 event celebrated four years of promoting the importance of physical activity to Floridians by hosting more than 500 events statewide. Each county health department, in conjunction with local community partners, determined specific physical activity opportunities and/or locations and highlighted events throughout their community.

Two highlights of the 2007 event happened in Jefferson and Broward counties. Jefferson County Health Department participated in the kick-off event on February 1, 2007. Activities like table

tennis and aerobics were held throughout the day highlighted by a ribbon-cutting of a new walking and biking park at Jefferson County Recreation Park presented by former Olympic race walker, Mark Fenton. In addition, Broward County Health Department, in partnership with Commit2BFit™, implemented a countywide physical activity initiative that invited all Broward County residents to participate in 15 minutes of physical activity in their own homes, worksites, parks and schools on February 15, 2007. Broward County School District also allowed students to participate in 15 minutes of simultaneous physical activity on the same day.

For more information about the campaign, or to find out what is going on in your area, you can visit the Step Up, Florida! Web site at www.stepupflorida.org or contact the Florida Department of Health Step Up, Florida! coordinator at (850) 245-4330. ■



'Tis the Season

With the official start to hurricane season just over three months away, there's plenty to do before June 1.

Now is the time to review your family disaster plan and make any necessary adjustments. By starting now, you will have plenty of time to institute those changes, stock up on needed items and avoid more stress if an emergency should occur.

Begin by reviewing your neighborhood and community. Be aware of floodprone areas, power plants and hazardous chemicals that may be stored nearby. Evaluate how your property could be affected by flood, fire or wind damage. And don't forget to check your insurance. Some damage might not be covered by your existing policy.

One of the most vital tools is a disaster supply kit. Using the checklists supplied by www.floridadisaster.org and www.ready.gov will ensure that you have the proper amount of food, water, clothes and other supplies for everyone in your family. Don't forget about the pets when you create your kit. They're relying on you.

If it's necessary to leave the area be sure that everyone in your family, including relatives who live out of town, have all of the necessary information. Map an escape route from your

house and other places where you may frequently be, such as school or work site, and designate a meeting place so that everyone can be accounted for. Have several evacuation routes marked in case your primary route is blocked.

Make plans now, so that you are well prepared. Look to this column in the coming months as we update you on procedures and common mistakes that can be made during an emergency. ■

—SAVE THE DATE—

Who?

All DOH employees.

What?

Satellite broadcast on hurricane preparedness focusing on local response and state support. Several DOH leaders will present important information on the role of the DOH in an emergency situation. Please contact your local site coordinator for registration and viewing location information.

When?

June 6.

People in Public Health

NEW MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) announced new members within the executive office of the secretary. A newly appointed chief of staff, two deputy secretaries and an inspector general will work within the department to carry out its mission of promoting and protecting the health and safety of all Floridians.



Berfield

TIM CERIO The department's general counsel since 2005, Mr. Cerio accepted the position of chief of staff. In this role, Mr. Cerio will advise the secretary, manage the department, and work with the governor's office to ensure DOH issues are heard.

"During the two years Tim served as general counsel, he proved himself to be a vital part of the DOH team," said Dr. Viamonte Ros. "He is an effective leader, a strong counselor and advocate, and a team player. His vast knowledge of DOH issues and his desire to improve the health of Floridians will continue to be a huge asset to DOH."

KIM BERFIELD Ms. Berfield will assume the newly created position of deputy secretary of legislative affairs and communication. Ms. Berfield served as state representative for District 50 from 2000–2006, and has also worked as a marketing and business development consultant.

JEAN KLINE, R.N., M.P.H. Ms. Kline began serving as deputy secretary for health, state public health nursing director and state women's health officer on February 23.

She has served as the Indian River County Health Department Administrator since 1995, and has also served as the Region 5 Domestic Security Task Force Health Co-Chair since 2003.

JIM BOYD Mr. Boyd will serve as inspector general of the Department of Health. Prior to coming to DOH, he served as inspector general for the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Supreme Court, the Department of Commerce, and the State Comptroller. He has also served as audit administrator in the executive office of the governor, and as an adjunct accounting instructor at Florida State University. ■



Boyd

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Dr. Viamonte Ros toured the damaged DeLand clinic with VCHD Director Coleman. They also visited staff at Women's Health Services, WIC and Nutrition, and had lunch with staff at the primary care and pharmacy in Orange City.

"We were so excited to meet our new health secretary and we are delighted that she took time from her schedule to come down here to meet with us," said Marisol Bahena, VCHD financial clerk. "It shows she really cares about the employees and we certainly appreciate her time and support."

Please visit <http://www.volusiahealth.com> for current information. ■



Dr. Joe Johnson, Florida Hospital Fish Memorial; Dr. Thomas R. Coleman, director Volusia CHD; Dr. Viamonte Ros, DOH secretary; Jean Kline, deputy health secretary

THANKS! The Health Advisor greatly appreciates the help it received for this issue. Our contributors this month include: Sonia Clavijo-McNelis, Katie Rainka, Stefany Strong and Donna Aftuck.

the advisor

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Please contact Stephanie Turnau in order to update your mailing address, contact information or to change the number of copies you would like to receive.

EIGHT ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS SELECTED FOR PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) announced today that eight public health professionals have been selected as fellows for the 2007 Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute (EPHLI). Coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with the St. Louis University and Louisville Metro Health Department, the program was developed to build leadership competency within the country's environmental public health system.

"This is an amazing testament to the dedication of our environmental health leaders and their commitment to continual professional development," Deputy State Health Officer Bonnie Sorensen, M.D., M.B.A. said. "The leadership capabilities of our staff are key to Florida's response to emerging public health threats and effectiveness in delivering quality environmental health services."

With emphasis on the core functions of public health, fellows will work on practical leadership projects covering a variety of focus areas, including everything from systems thinking and conflict management to collaborative leadership and policy and politics. A series of self-assessments are also integrated into program content. ■

DOH CONGRATULATES AND RECOGNIZES THE FOLLOWING 2007 ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE FELLOWS:

Trevor Coke

Environmental Supervisor II, Miami-Dade County Health Department

Al Gray

Environmental Health Director, Hernando County Health Department

Charles Henry

Environmental Health Director, Sarasota County Health Department

Greg Kearney

Environmental Epidemiologist, Tallahassee State Health Office

Keith Keene

Environmental Health Director, DeSoto County Health Department

Elizabeth Miller

Environmental Health Director, Madison County Health Department

David Overfield

Environmental Health Director, Orange County Health Department

Barbara Will

Environmental Health Supervisor II, Manatee County Health Department