

the health advisor

DOH Mission:

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

Jan./Feb. 2004

The Florida Department of Health envisions turning much of the 134 acres of state land in Lantana into a multi-functioning public health research campus that will enhance existing expertise and partnerships, spotlight South Florida as a

center for disease investigation, and create opportunity for public health practice to integrate with public health research.

The concept has been talked about for some time now, according to Deputy State Health Officer Bonnie Sorensen, M.D., M.B.A., and was brought to the forefront with the recent announcement that Scripps Florida will locate in Palm Beach County. (Scripps Florida is the biomedical research institute formed here by Scripps Research Institute of California.)

State health officers are scheduled to present plans to Lantana officials in January and are hoping for a positive response. Sorensen predicts the endeavor would take about 5 years to complete.

The vision is the "Florida Institute for Public Health—A Center of Excellence for Public Health." It recreates the land that currently is home to A.G. Holley State Hospital, a county health department clinic and a state laboratory, into a focal point for research, training, bioterrorism preparedness and treatment of infectious diseases. It also will provide opportunities for partnerships with other research entities.

The development would involve replacing A.G. Holley, a four-story pink building founded in 1950 as a tuberculosis sanitarium and the last of its kind in the country. To take its place, a new 50-bed, state-of-the-art hospital would be built to provide cutting edge treatment and research on respiratory diseases and other airborne infections. The facility would house an Advanced Practice Center designed as a proactive force in the protection against the spread of airborne diseases.

The proposal also calls for expanding the Palm Beach County Health Department clinic that would serve as a teaching rotation site for medical schools. Also, the existing Palm Beach Branch laboratory programs would be expanded 30,000 square feet to accommodate biological and chemical lab analysis capabilities. The modern, bio-level III laboratory would train experts and respond to emergency laboratory analysis needs in the event of suspected bioterrorism or major disease outbreak.

Another key element to the research campus would be a multi-specialty health center developed in partnership with the University of Miami for teaching and research that would focus on infectious diseases including tropical and emerging infections, and the effects of bioterrorism and chemical events. Training would utilize concepts already demonstrated as successful in the treatment of tuberculosis such as the physicians' network, telemedicine, and local case management.

Plans show a portion of the campus would be developed for a university research park.

Plans also allow for an international conference center and a residential component that would likely be used mostly by university faculty, university students and visiting researchers, as well as public and private partners in the research and training fields. This portion of the venture would be

health officials envision public health research campus in lantana

Together, Lantana, the institute, and the other partners will be in the vanguard of the effort to protect Floridians and others against the spread of disease and other disasters of this new century.



funded through private-public partnerships where the state-owned land may be made available on a long-term lease basis at nominal costs as development incentives.

A nature preserve and recreational area would be set aside, while another area may be used for commercial medical facilities, according to drawings. Sorensen said the department currently is looking into positive economic impacts such as taxes and utility payments to include in the presentation to Lantana officials. — Juli Bergstrom-Wasson, Advisor Editor

secretary's roundtable to key in on primary public health areas

Health Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A., will meet with health colleagues in February to discuss primary public health functions the department may focus on for the next two to four years. The "Secretary's Roundtable," a two-day meeting facilitated by the Office of Performance Improvement, is the result of a retreat with Dr. Agwunobi and the deputy secretaries. A diverse group of DOH employees also will participate in the roundtable. The workgroup will help fine tune the department's short and long-term goals, identify interim measures for achieving these goals, and help create a plan of action. Information from last year's Leadership Team retreat will be provided to assist the workgroup. This group suggested that renewed department support be focused on the following:

THE CORE FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC HEALTH, ASSESSMENT, ASSURANCE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT How are these measured in public health settings? How do they contribute to prevention?

THE 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES Establish baselines for comparison.

HEALTHY PEOPLE 2010 What did data in 2000 reflect? How does it compare today?

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS How do we use this data to determine what will be focused on in the next few years?

PREVENTION Is it truly a priority?

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO DISEASES Should the focus be on contributing factors to diseases that bring together many programs and a comprehensive approach?

HOW CAN WORKING ACROSS PROGRAMS WITH IDENTIFIED SIMILAR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES HELP REDUCE DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS AND COSTS?

For more information about the Roundtable, contact the Office of Performance Improvement at 850-245-4001.

CHD is one of polk county's "best places to work"

Polk County Health Department is one of the area's "Best Places to Work," according to Polk's Workforce Development Board, also known as Polk Works. The recent recognition honored employers that are taking the lead to develop quality workplaces for employees and potential workers.

"There are many positive aspects of working at Polk CHD," wrote one employee when asked about working there. "The most important thing for me is knowing that I serve the community in which I live. By giving people their health, they are able to live better lives. The employees work together toward a common goal of improving not only the lives of our clients, but also the life of the community."

In all, eight workplaces in the county were honored in November as "Best Places." The Polk Workforce Development Board works to implement local employment and training programs to benefit job seekers, employees and employers. The "best places" recognition is the first one and Workforce officials hope the ranking will bring attention to the county and the quality of life these companies have helped establish.

Polk CHD was noted for the wide variety of benefits it offers to its 500 employees, including flexible time off, and financial assistance and counseling through its Employee Assistance Program. Companies also received recognition for innovative approaches to motivating and retaining employees, training and development initiatives, and workplace practices that included commitment to work and life issues.

The other companies receiving recognition were GEICO Direct, Lakeland Regional Medical Center, Bank of America, Citrus & Chemical Bank, Peace River Electric Cooperative, Vangaurd Medical Concepts, and the Badcock Corporation.

Sarasota CHD's school health team makes significant inroads

In Sarasota County, the 43,000 K-12 students are the real winners when it comes to awareness campaigns championed by Sarasota CHD's School Health Team.

The 23-member, award-winning Health Team promotes well-being, health education and safety, and continues to teach, assess and advocate for student health. In fact, there have been significant gains in school health in Sarasota County. Supplemental funding and the Comprehensive School Health Model allowed eight nurses and a clerk to be added to the team during the 2002-2003 school year. Partnerships with the school district, local hospitals and the county government helped secure funding during 2003 for one full-time nurse to be assigned at each of the county's six high schools.

The team and its staff demonstrate a daily commitment to customer service, data collection for outcomes measurement, and continuing education that Team Supervisor Christine Griffith, R.N., says are vital elements to sustaining health services to a growing and changing school community.

And the team's efforts have not gone unnoticed by local officials. The Sarasota County Government recognized the School Health Team with the coveted Performance Recognized as Outstanding (PRO) Award five times since 2001—three of which were awarded in a nine-month time period. PRO award nominations undergo rigorous evaluation by two local councils. In 2003, team member Joanne Denner, R.N., P.H.N., was honored with the PRO award for extraordinary case management of a medically fragile student. Denner "went the extra customer-service mile" with child, family and school, providing for a successful health outcome. Another PRO award was presented to team support staff member Laura Butscha for the development of a system to collect, tabulate and report state-required data from 48 public schools. A third award was presented to Constance Toops, R.N., M.S.N., P.H.N., for developing and teaching a vision screening in-service to 20 nurses, providing each with CEU credits toward their professional licensure requirements.

The School Health Team continues its efforts and strives for excellence as it reaches its diverse audiences. One goal for the new year is to develop, in conjunction with the Sarasota County School Board, a wellness program for both staff and students at each school campus that will focus on Health and Prevention Education and Health Screening.

—Dianne Shipley and Christine Griffith, Sarasota County Health Department

Pasco CHD sees results with arthritis self-management courses

Pasco CHD has seen positive results from its Arthritis Self-Help Courses (ASHC) and training for course leaders. First awarded funding in 2002 from the department's Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention through its cooperative agreement with the CDC, program funding will continue through 2004.

ASHC is a group education program designed to complement the professional services provided by a health care team. It is an evidence-based intervention that has been shown to reduce pain by 20 percent and physician visits by 40 percent. The six-week, 2 1/2 hour session per-week program is designed to help participants learn and practice different skills to build their own individualized self-management program. Participants have experienced the added benefits of increased knowledge about arthritis, frequency of exercise and relaxation, and self-confidence, as well as a decrease in depression caused by arthritis.

Two Arthritis Foundation volunteers lead courses. Pasco County also has nine course leaders, many of whom have some form of arthritis such as fibromyalgia. The course allows participants to share their experiences with others, offering the opportunity to help and learn from others with arthritis.

In 2002 to July of 2003, Pasco CHD conducted 10 ASHC courses in various locations from Dade City to New Port Richey. More than 130 people participated. During this fiscal year, Pasco has so far conducted about four courses with an average of 14 people per class, and more sessions are scheduled for 2004. —Megan Carmichael, Pasco County Health Department

DOH receives CDC support for capacity-building initiative

Florida is among eight states participating in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Assessment Initiative.

The goal of Florida's initiative is to improve the capabilities of CHDs and their community partners to conduct community health assessments and apply the results for improved health outcomes. DOH is unique in its approach to community health improvement planning as the methodology, strategies and tools are modeled on the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) model, Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP). Florida's MAPP-based process for community health improvement planning will not only help communities identify and prioritize specific health issues, but also improve the capabilities of CHDs and their partners to track public health goals and Healthy People 2010 goals. Identification and reduction of health disparities and workforce skill enhancement are among the benefits of engaging in the comprehensive process.

Under the leadership of Meade Grigg, Director, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Data Analysis, the Community Health Assessment Resource Tool Set (CHARTS) data website was launched to support the community health planning process. Web-based instruction on a variety of community health assessment-related topics including the MAPP model, data interpretation, and evaluation will soon be available through the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Data Analysis website. Technical assistance also is available.

For more information on community health improvement planning, contact Christine Abarca, at Christine_Abarca@doh.state.fl.us or by phone at 850-245-4444 ext. 2071. —Christine Abarca, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Data Analysis

CDC grant expands scope of birth defects surveillance program

The CDC in November awarded a five-year grant to the department's Division of Environmental Health for expanding the state's Population-based Birth Defects Surveillance Program. The grant provides \$180,000 each of the five years, for a total of \$900,000.

"This grant recognizes the vital role Florida plays in tracking, investigating and preventing birth defects," said DOH Deputy State Health Officer for Children's Medical Services Elizabeth Ford, M.D., M.B.A. "I am pleased that this funding will allow us to work together with our many partners to prevent birth defects and to reduce morbidity, disability and mortality."

The Florida Birth Defects Registry is the central source of information on birth defects in the state. The CDC funds will expand the tracking systems and prevention activities, and also be used to provide resources to improve case finding and service referrals for families.

The activities will be supported through collaborative efforts between the Florida Birth Defects Registry, Children's Medical Services, Maternal and Child Health Programs, and Healthy Start.

For more information about the registry, visit <<http://flbdr.hsc.usf.edu/>>.

One goal for the new year is to develop, in conjunction with the Sarasota County School Board, a wellness program for both staff and students at each school campus that will focus on Health and Prevention Education and Health Screening.

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Florida has the fourth highest birth rate in the country and is one of 37 states with legislative mandates for newborn hearing screening.

The state has made remarkable progress in providing effective hearing screening and strengthening the linkages for diagnosis of hearing loss and referrals for family-centered services.

Since October 2000 every baby born in Florida has had his or her hearing screened, usually in the first day of life. Approximately one out of 10 children who are referred for further testing after not passing newborn hearing screening will be found to have a hearing loss. It's expected that almost 600 infants with hearing loss will be identified every year due to universal newborn hearing screening efforts.

Screening for hearing loss is only the first step. Effective early intervention is the key to preventing communication and cognitive delays that can accompany hearing loss. Research has shown that it is critical for families to be involved in appropriate early intervention activities within the first 6 months of their child's life if the developmental effects of hearing loss are to be prevented or minimized.

In order to meet this challenge, the Children's Medical Services Early Intervention Program developed a specific component to meet the special

needs of children with hearing loss and their families. It's called SHINE, for Serving Hearing Impaired Newborns Effectively. This component of local early intervention programs is available to any family of a child between the ages of birth and 3 years who has been diagnosed with hearing loss.

SHINE provides support and information to families, usually within 2 weeks of the confirmation of hearing loss. Specially trained SHINE service coordinators assist the family in accessing needed services. Initial service providers of SHINE spend time with the family or other caregivers, usually in their home or daycare setting. Information is provided on the effects of hearing loss on development of listening, cognition, speech and language skills. Support is provided as the child receives his or her first hearing aids, often by the age of 3 months. Most importantly, parents and caregivers are provided with communication strategies that will help the child who is deaf or hard of hearing to develop interaction and language skills at a rate approaching that of babies with normal hearing.

Each local SHINE team has been provided a basket of videos and written materials valued at \$1,000. These materials are loaned to parents to assist

them in understanding the impact of hearing loss and the different means of developing communication and language skills. Once parents receive this initial information, they can knowledgeably enter into ongoing services to meet the communication goals of their child.

The legislation that mandated universal newborn hearing screening was a critical first step to early identification of children with hearing loss. The SHINE component of early intervention provides the support and services parents need to assist their child in preventing communication and learning delays. Together, it is anticipated that increasing numbers of young children with hearing loss will have better outcomes at school age, with less special services required. Universal newborn hearing screening and SHINE are working together to improve the future of children with hearing loss in Florida.

For more information on newborn hearing screening and SHINE early intervention services contact Karen Anderson, Ph.D., CCC-A, FAAA at 4025 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A06, Tallahassee FL 32399-1707, 850-245-4444 x2269 or at Karen_Anderson@doh.state.fl.us.

—Karen L. Anderson, Children's Medical Services

preparedness-related projects awarded funding

In conjunction with the department's Quality Showcase, sponsored each year by the Office of Performance Improvement, Quality Demonstration Projects are submitted, reviewed and awarded funding based on the nature of the project. This year preparedness-related projects were also included. As a result, four demo projects were awarded funding to help them accomplish their goals.

Santa Rosa County recognized a need for bioterrorism training for all levels of health care providers—county EMS, nurses and physician's office staff. The group, led by Charlene Echols, plans to use the “Zebra Pack” and an interactive lecture series to educate the medical community, the Santa Rosa staff, and the nursing community to enhance the knowledge base of health care providers. The “Zebra Pack” is a bioterrorism guidebook written and produced to be a quick reference guide for all physicians in the community. It will also improve the communication system to expand the county health department's capacity to detect and investigate unusual events.

Paula Winton, Team Leader, and her group from Children's Medical Services (CMS), Rockledge Office, will be providing preparedness services and training to 50 high-risk CMS families who do not have the tools to cope with either natural or man-made disasters. These families with medically fragile children face unique obstacles when a disaster occurs. At the end of this program, the families will be tested and evaluated for their abilities to deal with any unusual event.

The Region V Domestic Security Task Force, which is comprised of nine counties (Brevard, Volusia, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Lake), guided by Dave Freeman, recognized that there was no mechanism for monitoring medical resource availability or patient tracking if a mass casualty event were to occur. The goal of the project is to implement EMSsystem, a web-based software, in the Orlando RDSTF's underserved rural CHDs. It will provide a real-time communication infrastructure that connects partners in Region 5 Domestic Security Task Force. In addition to installing EMSsystem, the Orlando Region has a plan to educate, develop policies, and evaluate the impact of the EMSsystem.

The Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Data Analysis (Tom Hering, Team Leader), the Office of State Laboratories and several county health departments have joined together to increase efficiency of CHD laboratory processing through increased usage of the HCMS Laboratory module. At the present time, only 37 percent of tests submitted to the State Lab from the CHDs are using the Health Clinic Management System automated Bar Code process. Through increased usage of the HCMS system, there would be substantial savings to the department due to the efficiencies and accuracy gained through the utilization of the automated process.

—Dian La Tour, Office of Performance Improvement

public health nursing office begins preparedness training

With the nation's keen eye on preparedness in the event of a man-made or natural disaster, it's paramount that public health nurses be knowledgeable and prepared for any event. The Office of Public Health Nursing's disaster preparedness mission and function is to protect the health of Florida's citizens and visitors by minimizing the potential for illnesses and injuries related to disasters. To do this, the Office of Public Health Nursing must collaborate with other Department of Health programs, federal, state, local, and volunteer agencies to judiciously respond to the health and medical needs of disaster victims.

Beginning this year, the Office of Public Health Nursing will provide preparedness training for Florida's public health nurses. The training will use the nine emergency preparedness core competencies developed by Professor Kristine Gebbie of the Columbia University School of Nursing in conjunction with the CDC.

Training will be presented in two segments. The first will consist of five computer modules that encompass the nine core competencies. The goal of the five modules is to provide the basic information needed to ensure the novice public health nurse will have the skills necessary to recognize deviations from the norm, information needed to respond appropriately to any disaster or emergency situation, appropriate knowledge of the chain of command, knowledge of the nurse's role in a disaster or emergency, and insight into the tasks and skills needed during a disaster or emergency. These modules are the basis that will be built upon in the second segment. The second segment consists of trainings that will be brought to county health department and Children's Medical Services nurses. The presentation first will be given to the regional trainers in a train-the-trainer format. The instruction given will augment and expand the information provided in the computer-based modules to better prepare the public health nurse for a disaster or an emergency.

Once the train-the-trainer has been completed, assistance will be provided to trainers and counties as needed. As information and procedures are revised, updated presentations will be provided and annual continuing education courses will be offered electronically.

The goal of the preparedness training is to ensure nurses are able to assess, recognize, communicate and respond, and thereby potentially reduce chaos in the event of a large-scale disaster. —Arlene Cotton, Office of Public Health Nursing

health journals available online DOH employees now have online access to 29 health journals through the department Intranet. Such journals include American Journal of Epidemiology, American Journal of Nursing and The Lancet.

The online availability provides opportunity for employees to stay current with public health issues as well as increase knowledge and awareness of topics both current and past, as archived issues also are available. Online subscriptions provide quick access, and access to past volumes at no extra fee. Many offer searches by key words, title and author.

The site, maintained by the Office of Performance Improvement, is available at http://dohiws/Divisions/Perf_Improvement/WFD/journal/journal.htm.

User response so far has been very positive, including: “This is a real cost savings and benefit for little counties who could never have afforded to subscribe to all these journals!”

Even further indication of its resourcefulness, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has expressed interest in using the department's online journal process as a model for other state health agencies.

The Office of Performance Improvement welcomes suggestions and feedback that will help us maintain and improve this online service for employees, including information about a journal not yet included. Please contact Lynda Kinard for more information about the site.

—Lynda Kinard, Office Of Performance Improvement



making the workplace healthier spotlight on DOH's mediation program

As conflicts in the workplace and seriousness of these issues appear to be on the rise throughout the nation, the Department of Health is at the forefront helping assist coworkers communicate and amicably resolve workplace tensions.

In 2000, the department's Bureau of Human Resource Management (BHRM) implemented what possibly was the first in-house, peer-employee mediation program in state government. The program expanded statewide in 2001 following the success and enthusiasm captured during the pilot program.

And in June of 2002, Secretary Agwunobi signed the Mediation Policy, formalizing the department's commitment to the program. That same year the department's Bureau of Human Resource Management was awarded a Davis Award of excellence for its mediation program.

The program is voluntary and provides an opportunity for employees to resolve workplace conflicts quickly through dialogue with those directly involved in the conflict with the aid of a neutral third person. Mediation may be conducted on a myriad of issues. Examples include, but are not



Bureau of Human Resource Management staff members Donna Virnelson, Dana Baird, Vicki Mehrand Susan Veal assist coworkers with conflicts.

limited to, interpersonal conflicts, inconsistent discipline and workplace etiquette.

The dialogue is informal and non-adversarial. The third-party mediator or facilitator (there are 87 across the state) encourages resolution without prescribing a resolution, and helps colleagues work together to reach accord on mutual issues of concern. If the employees cannot reach agreement or wish to end the dialogue, they may simply end the process.

For more information about the DOH mediation program or how to become a trained mediator, please contact the Bureau of Human Resource Management, or your servicing human resource office.

—Dana Baird, Bureau of Human Resource Management

people in public health

florida board of medicine honors health secretary The Florida Board of Medicine recognized Secretary Agwunobi at its board meeting in October by presenting him with the Chairman's Recognition Award. Past Chairman Gaston Acosta-Rua, M.D., established the award to recognize and commend physicians who exemplify outstanding contributions to the protection of Florida's citizens, the medical profession and public service.

Florida Board of Medicine Chairman Raghavendra Vijayangar, M.D., said, "By presenting this award, we honor a wonderful leader and physician who not only serves as a fine example to all physicians, but also as someone who has gone beyond the call of duty for all of Florida."

"As a physician, I am both honored and humbled by the Florida Board of Medicine's recognition," said Dr. Agwunobi. "Their public service, commitment and dedication to protecting the people of Florida inspire me deeply."

Dr. Agwunobi has a wealth of experience in health care delivery, managed care, health policy and public health. Prior to becoming Secretary and State Health Officer, he served the people of Florida as Deputy Secretary and Deputy State Health Officer for Children's Medical Services.

The Florida Board of Medicine protects the health and safety of Florida's residents and visitors by establishing minimum requirements for licensure and through diligent discipline of practitioners who violate practice acts defined Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Code. The legislative intent is to ensure that every physician practicing in the state of Florida meets minimum requirements for safe practice. The Board's responsibility is to ensure that physicians who fall below minimum competency or who otherwise present a danger to the public are disciplined or prohibited from practicing in the state. The Board also establishes and monitors continuing education of physicians to ensure their knowledge and skills remain current. The Board also oversees the regulation of physician assistants, electrologists, dietitians and nutritionists, as well as physician office surgery centers.

department names new Seminole CHD administrator Michael J. Napier, M.S., was named administrator of Seminole County Health Department in January.

Napier has more than 16 years in public health, and has held management positions with several Florida CHDs. Most recently, he served as the financial administrator for the Hillsborough County Health Department and managed its \$38 million budget. Napier is a past president of the Florida Association of Business Administrators and the current treasurer of the Florida Public Health Association.

He received his Master of Science degree in 1997 from the University of Central Florida and his Bachelor of Science degree from Barry University in 1994. He is a graduate of the Florida Public Health Leadership Institute and an active member of the Florida Public Health Association.

As administrator of Seminole CHD, Napier is responsible for the oversight and supervision of public health programs throughout the county.

department names new director for Charlotte CHD Joseph R. Goggin, M.D., was named director of the Charlotte County Health Department in December. Goggin's tenure in public and private health care spans more than 30 years, including experience as a surgeon, a medical director, and a member of several health advisory boards and councils.

Goggin received his medical degree in 1966 from New York Medical College and completed his surgical residency training in 1971. He received his masters in health services administration from the College of St. Francis in 1995.

Goggin was in private practice as a surgeon for more than 25 years, and most recently served as director of Care-A-Van, an outreach program in DeSoto County that uses a mobile health care van and a primary care clinic to help those in need.

As director of the Charlotte CHD, Goggin will be responsible for the oversight and supervision of public health programs throughout the county and charged with the management of a \$6.5 million budget and more than 87 employees.

rodenberg selected director of volusia CHD Howard Rodenberg, M.D., M.P.H., was selected director of the Volusia County Health Department in October. Rodenberg's tenure in public and private health care spans almost 15 years, including experiences as an emergency physician, professor, medical consultant, and medical director.

Rodenberg received his medical degree in 1986 from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine and completed his residency training in emergency medicine in 1989. He received his masters in public health from the University of South Florida in 2001.

For the first six years of his career, he was medical director for ShandsCair flight program at the University of Florida while simultaneously serving as the medical director for the Alachua County department of fire/rescue services. He most recently worked at Halifax Medical Center as an emergency physician.

As director of the Volusia County Health Department, Rodenberg will be responsible for the oversight and supervision of public health programs throughout the county. He will be charged with the management of an \$18 million budget and more than 317 employees.



department-wide satisfaction survey begins march one

Employee will have the opportunity to give important feedback on work conditions, employee treatment and to help guide future planning for continuous improvement through the 2004 Employee Satisfaction Survey (ESS). The survey is scheduled to begin March 1 and employees will have two weeks to complete electronically.

This year's survey will complete the third statewide survey and yield important trend data. To assure confidentiality, the vendor Dr. Bill Blackwood, will conduct the survey.

Expect to see more about the survey through DOH Bulletins that will help make this ESS the easiest one so far to complete online. Until then, for more information please contact Jeanne Lane or Bonnie Gaughan-Bailey in the Office of Performance Improvement, SunCom 205-4007.

miami-dade CHD administrator honored for achievements in leadership

The Miami chapter of the National Association of Puerto Rican Women, Inc., honored Miami-Dade County Health Department Administrator Lillian Rivera, R.N., M.S.N., as "Outstanding Woman of the Year." The October recognition was presented during the association's annual meeting and 25th anniversary celebration.

In addition to the award, Rivera was presented with an award from the Miami-Dade County Office of the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners. Both awards cited Rivera's stellar career and exemplary achievements in leadership. Miami-Dade County government also praised her knowledge of health care systems, citing that she has "proved to be highly capable" and "a professional committed to rendering the best of service to our community."

—Olga Connor, Miami-Dade County Health Department

The newly registered environmental health professionals will be recognized by credentials designations that include Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS), Registered Sanitarian (RS) and Registered Environmental Health Professional (REHP).

An individual who passes the FEHA registration exam is exempt from the DOH requirements for Food and On-Site Treatment and Disposal System certification.

For more information please contact Greg Kearney, R.S., MPH or Ray Collins, R.S., MPH, at 772-221-4090 or 772-221-4000. —Elisia Norton, Environmental Health

nurse specialist recognized for her work with children

Juanita Barnhart's dedication to children in Hendry and Glades counties earned her the 2003 Hispanic Woman of Distinction award, presented in November by the Southwest Coast Division of the March of Dimes and the PanAmerican Alliance.

Barnhart is a registered nurse specialist with Children's Medical Services who works out of the Ft. Myers office. She works mostly with the underserved rural communities of Clewiston, Moore Haven and LaBelle. Of her accomplishments, she said she is most proud of the seeds she planted in her own children. A daughter and granddaughter have followed her career path into nursing.

—Martha E. Valiant, Hendry and Glades County Health Department Director

employees collect food for hundreds of meals

DOH employees joined with America's Second Harvest of the Big Bend to provide food assistance for local residents during a one-week canned food drive in October. Twelve department satellite offices collected enough food donations for more than 800 meals.

"We want to offer our heartfelt thanks to the management and staff of the Department of Health who are committed to helping feed the thousands of families in need in the Big Bend area," said Cindy L. Wagner, executive director of America's Second Harvest of the Big Bend and president of the Florida Association of Food Banks.

With warehouse facilities in Tallahassee and Madison, America's Second Harvest of the Big Bend provides food directly to more than 300 partner agencies in the 14 counties of the Big Bend area. America's Second Harvest of the Big Bend defines hunger as the inability to purchase enough food to meet basic nutritional needs. Hunger affects the elderly, unemployed, disabled, homeless, working poor, victims of natural disasters and many others.

the advisor

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Please send stories & information for the Mar./Apr. issue by e-mail to Juli Bergstrom-Wasson in the Office of Performance Improvement by Feb. 1, 2004.

The Health Advisor is available on the DOH Intranet & Internet websites.

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CHD employees become registered environmental health professionals

Eleven state employees from three CHDs recently passed a rigorous, four-hour exam that measures knowledge in environmental health content areas, including food protection, solid and hazardous waste, radiation protection, swimming pools and statutes and regulation, and they became registered environmental health professionals. The 11 also met educational and work experience requirements.

Through its Registration Board, the Florida Environmental Health Association (FEHA) administers the Registered Environmental Health Specialist exam and provides nationally recognized credentialing of professionals in the environmental health field.

FEHA, which is an affiliate of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), is a non-profit organization, comprised of more than 500 professionals who help protect and promote the health and safety of Florida's residents and visitors. Currently, there are 162 registered environmental health professionals in the state of Florida.

Pittsburg State University honors Miami lab director with alumni award

Segaran P. Pillai, Ph.D., SM (AAM), a microbiologist geneticist and director of the department's Bureau of Laboratories in Miami, was honored during Pittsburg State University homecoming activities in October as one of the six outstanding alumni. The outstanding Alumni Award is presented annually by the PSU Alumni Association and Pittsburg State University in recognition of professional and civic achievements. Pillai has published more than 30 articles, presented at 18 conferences, and has three patents. He is a voluntary assistant professor of medicine at the University of Miami School of Medicine and also is a member of the program advisory council of the Nova Southeastern University, College of Osteopathic Medicine, master of public health program. He serves as editor of the "Archives of Dermatology."

Pillai earned a bachelor of science degree in biology from PSU in 1989, graduating with departmental academic honors. He earned a master's of science degree in biology (medical physiology) with departmental honors in 1990 from PSU. He earned a Ph.D. in biochemistry/molecular genetics in 1995 from the University of Kansas.

—Pittsburg State University News Services & Media Relations

Florida's newest environmental health professionals include:

Robert Maglievaz, R.S.,
Volusia CHD

Leonelo Carbonell, R.S.,
Broward CHD

M. Muri Casey, R.S.,
Palm Beach CHD

Kristin Delea, R.E.H.S.,
Palm Beach CHD

Mary Echols, R.E.H.P.,
Palm Beach CHD

Robert Gallo, R.E.H.S.,
Palm Beach CHD

Jose Garcia, R.E.H.P.,
Palm Beach CHD

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