

the health advisor

DOH Mission:

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

Sept./Oct. 2004

spinal cord injury mentoring network links people with similar life situations

“Why Me?” For those who have sustained a traumatic spinal cord injury, the first question often is, “Why me?” This question highlights the extreme feelings of isolation one can experience after having sustained such an injury. While family, friends, and health care professionals are there for immediate assistance, there still exists a gap in understanding.

Enter the Florida Spinal Cord Injury Resource Center's (FSCIRC) program: The Peer Mentor Network.

The Department of Health-funded FSCIRC launched the statewide mentoring program in January. The program was developed by the department's Bureau of Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program and FSCIRC Director Brian Sterner.

The Peer Mentor Network links mentors and those with new spinal cord injuries whose life situations are similar. Not only do mentors help dispel feelings of isolation experienced by individuals with new injuries, they also assist with the goal of achieving maximum independence.

Mentors can volunteer their time with survivors in the hospital, at home, or on the job. So far, 13 mentors have been trained and are registered in the network, and several others have expressed interest.

Those mentoring can help with everything from activities of daily living to psychosocial issues encountered upon returning home. Each new spinal cord injury can receive up to 20 hours of mentoring and mentors are compensated for travel costs by the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program.

While various areas of the state have had similar peer mentor programs through rehabilitation hospitals, the FSCIRC Peer Mentor Network brings mentoring to areas where no programs exist, as well as works with existing programs.

For more information on the resource center and the Peer Mentor Network, visit online at <http://flspinalcord.us/programs-peermentoring.html> or contact FSCIRC headquarter staff located at Tampa General Hospital, Suite R-212, Tampa, FL, 33601; by phone at 1-800-995-8544, or by email at: bsterner@flspinalcord.us. ■ **Brian Sterner, Florida Spinal Cord Injury Resource Center**



Thom DeLilla, left, Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program bureau chief and an SCI survivor of 30 years, with Brian Sterner, FSCIRC director and an SCI survivor of 10 years.

“The award winners join a special group of public health agencies that exemplify the forward thinking, proactive attitude of our nation's public health system.”

NACCHO President Michael C. Caldwell, MD, MPH.

florida captures six NACCHO awards

FOUR OF FLORIDA'S COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS RECEIVED SIX TOP HONORS FOR EXEMPLARY LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS BY NACCHO, THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY AND CITY HEALTH OFFICIALS. The awards were presented during NACCHO's annual conference in Minnesota in July.

“I am humbled by the extraordinary quality, innovation and service embodied in Florida's county health departments,” said DOH Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A., M.P.H. “These organizations are the front line of public health and I am pleased, but not surprised, to see them recognized amongst the best nationally.”

NACCHO presented 29 “Model Practice Awards” in all to programs from across the nation that demonstrate exemplary and replicable qualities in response to an identified public health need. The awards recognize initiatives—including programs, resources and tools—that show how local public health agencies and their community partners can effectively collaborate to address local public health concerns.

Florida's 2004 Model Practice Award recipients are:

Brevard County Volunteer Dental Clinic, Dentist's Care, Brevard County Health Department Merritt Island, FL

Cervical Cancer Screening and Follow Up, Brevard County Health Department Merritt Island, FL

Drinking Water Nitrification Surveillance Program, Lee County Health Department Ft. Myers, FL

Healthy Work Place, Lee County Health Department Ft. Myers, FL

Increased Medicaid Reimbursements to Enhance Breast/Cervical Cancer Screenings Project, Leon County Health Department Tallahassee, FL

Healthcare Emergency Response Coalition of Palm Beach County, Palm Beach County Health Department West Palm Beach, FL

“The award winners join a special group of public health agencies that exemplify the forward thinking, proactive attitude of our nation's public health system,” said NACCHO President Michael C. Caldwell, M.D., M.P.H.

NACCHO is the national organization representing local public health agencies (including city, county, metro, district, and tribal agencies). NACCHO supports efforts that protect and improve the health of all people and all communities by promoting national policy, developing resources and programs, and supporting effective local public health practice and systems. ■

public health teams mobilize for hurricane response

It's called hurricane season for a reason. But it's the havoc caused in Florida during the 2004 hurricane season so far that is especially daunting and all aspects from evacuation orders to the number of hurricanes and their individual personalities appear to be record setting.

The Department of Health has made incredible efforts to ensure the health and safety of thousands of people impacted from this season's hurricanes that have hit Florida. Employees throughout the state prepared to mobilize for response in August when Hurricane Bonnie threatened the state. These efforts heightened even as Bonnie fizzled into a storm because of looming Hurricane Charley.

And Charley's August 13 arrival to the Gulf Coast began the steady stream of health and medical services from the department including tremendous volunteer work from DOH employees. The work remained steady through hurricanes Frances and Ivan with employees from across Florida helping to ensure thousands of people have shelter, supplies and support.

Look for full coverage of the Department of Health's hurricane response and the incredible work of so many DOH employees in an upcoming Hurricane Special Edition of The Health Advisor.

DOH offers support for 12th year of world breastfeeding week



THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) CONGRATULATED ALL PAST AND PRESENT BREASTFEEDING WOMEN DURING THIS YEAR'S WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK AUGUST 1-7.

In its 12th year, World Breastfeeding Week was celebrated in more than 120 countries, with this year's theme, "Exclusive Breastfeeding: The Gold Standard... Safe, Sound and Sustainable," focusing on getting people worldwide to understand the importance of exclusively breastfeeding during the first six months of life.

"Exclusive breastfeeding is Safe because breast milk provides protection against common illnesses, Sound because the nutrients found in human milk are made just for human infants, and Sustainable because breastfeeding provides an infant with a constantly available source of food," said Deputy State Health Officer for Children's Medical Services S. Elizabeth Ford, M.D., M.B.A.

New studies have shown that formula feeding may increase the risk of childhood obesity. Studies also show breastfed children have fewer allergies and reduced risk of diabetes, some childhood cancers and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). For nursing mothers, breastfeeding reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer as well as osteoporosis. Health benefits are in a dose-response relationship-which means that the likelihood of getting health benefits is greatly increased with exclusive and extended breastfeeding.

Florida WIC is a public health nutrition program that promotes breastfeeding among its clients. Presently, approximately 65.5 percent of WIC mothers start out breastfeeding, compared to less than 45 percent 10 years ago.

Ford noted, "Florida's success in increasing breastfeeding rates among WIC mothers is a result of dedicated staff members who provide valuable breastfeeding information, education and support to WIC clients."

September is National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month



OVARIAN CANCER IS THE FOURTH MOST DIAGNOSED CANCER AND THE FIFTH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG WOMEN. The American Cancer Society estimates that there will be about 25,580 new cases of ovarian cancer in this country in 2004. About 16,090 women will die of the disease. According to recent data reported to Florida's statewide cancer registry, the Florida Cancer Data System, ovarian cancer cases total approximately 1,500 cases per year.

Ovarian cancer is caused by a malignant tumor that begins in the ovaries. Ovarian cancer is difficult to detect since it often does not show any obvious signs or symptoms until it is in an advanced stage; thus, impacting a woman's opportunity for successful treatment and recovery.

An ovarian cancer diagnosis may result from a physical exam or by a diagnostic test such as a pelvic exam, ultrasound, CA-125 assay, lower gastro-intestinal series or barium enema, CT scan or biopsy.

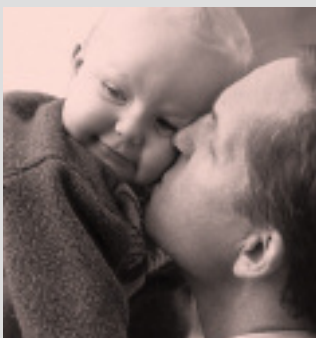
Risk factors that may contribute to the chance of developing ovarian cancer include:

- Family history (first degree relatives) who have had ovarian cancer
- Increasing age
- Personal history of breast or colon cancer
- Women who have never had children
- Use of fertility drugs

Having one or more of the risk factors identified above does not mean for certain that a woman will develop ovarian cancer, but the chance may be higher than average.

To find out more information, contact the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4-CANCER, visit the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition's Website at www.ovarian.org or go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Website at: www.cdc.gov. For recent data regarding the number of newly diagnosed ovarian cancers for the entire state of Florida and for each county, visit the Florida Cancer Data System's website at: www.fcds@med.miami.edu. ■ Sue Higgins, Bureau of Chronic Disease

website extends a hand for caring nurses



FLORIDA NURSES TOUCH LIVES IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS. For some, a nurse offers a warm hand to hold and a comforting word. For others, a nurse is a shoulder to lean on when you've run out of options and don't know where to turn.

Just over a year ago, the Office of Public Health Nursing created a rewards and recognition program for DOH nurses called "Caring Hands" to recognize nurses who have been nominated by their peers as going "above and beyond." One such nurse is Catherine Shields, R.N., case manager at Putnam County Health Department (CHD) in the migrant farm workers program, who coordinated services for a woman with a large breast mass. Because of Catherine's efforts, this client received a biopsy in a timely fashion and treatment through the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program.

Then there's Carol Mitnick, A.R.N.P. at the Lee CHD, who was called to the WIC office to respond to an infant with seizures. While there, the infant had a seizure and stopped breathing. Carol began CPR, and thanks to her rapid and professional reactions, the infant had an excellent outcome.

During the past year, 90 Caring Hands nominations were submitted by a total of 26 counties, CMS clinics and the central office. Special thanks to those who made the time to nominate our outstanding public health nurses. All those nominated receive a Caring Hands pin, a letter of congratulations from Director of the Office of Public Health Nursing Karen Eaton, a certificate, and recognition on the Caring Hands DOH website. The nomination is also shared with the nurse's CHD director/administrator and nursing director.

"I'm so excited about this initiative," says Office Director Eaton. "Our nurses are so deserving and we are proud to share their stories with the rest of the department."

Department of Health nurses wear several hats—they are community outreach partners who are working to create a safe, healthy environment for their communities. The Caring Hands Showcase can be found on the Public Health Nursing Intranet at: <http://dohiws.doh.state.fl.us/Divisions/PHNursing/index.htm> or on the Internet at: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/PHNursing/index.html>.

We encourage you to visit this site and nominate a nurse today! ■ Arlene Cotton, Office of Public Health Nursing

volusia CHD and partners promote reading initiative

THE NEW SMYRNA BEACH NUTRITION/WIC OFFICE IS PARTNERING WITH THE NEW SMYRNA BEACH HIGH SCHOOL AND THE VOLUSIA COUNTY LIBRARY ON A READING INITIATIVE THAT ENCOURAGES PARENTS TO READ TO CHILDREN.

The initiative is supported primarily through the Florida Learn and Serve Grant to New Smyrna Beach High School. Gently used books are available to patients in the clinic lobby. Books that go home with patients are replaced from a supply provided by the high school. Laminated posters promoting families reading together also draw attention to the books and the importance of reading to children. A video explaining how to read to children is periodically shown in the clinic waiting room.

“Book bags” are being assembled for parents at child health checkups. The bags include information how to get a library card, information about improving literacy for parents, guides about how to read to your child, and bookmarks. Age-appropriate new books also are included that have been selected by New Smyrna Beach High School teacher and reading coach Deborah Samuels.

Another reading effort at the Volusia County Health Department is called Read While You Wait. WIC clients receive a brochure that encourages parents to read to their children while waiting for their WIC services. The clients are then encouraged to have a WIC employee sign a card for each visit the parent chooses to read while in the waiting area. After a series of signatures are completed, the WIC parents are then eligible for a free children’s book. Parents have a much more pleasant wait time when they are encouraged to spend time reading. Our hope in the future is to further develop this program by having WIC Program volunteers also available to read to the children in wait areas.

■ Mary Ann Ruddy, Senior Public Health Nutritionist
■ Susan Skelley, Public Health Nutritionist Supervisor

During strategic planning sessions and through customer surveys, the immunizations team identified a gap in performance from the cycle time required by the CHD customers.

duval’s “hot shots” team improves method; represents CHD at sterling council

DUVAL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT’S “HOT SHOTS” TEAM FROM IMMUNIZATIONS REPRESENTED THE CHD AT THE ANNUAL COMPETITION FOR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT TEAMS SPONSORED BY THE FLORIDA STERLING COUNCIL.

The Hot Shot Team, whose work began in 2002, represented Region 2, covering the 20 counties from Nassau County south to Ocala and west to the Perry/Madison Area, and as such, the team was eligible for the statewide competition held in conjunction with the annual Florida Governor’s Sterling Council Conference.

Criteria against which teams were judged required a 15-page written application with supporting data, an interview with a panel of judges, and a public presentation that was expected to convey the team’s story, including use of tools, outcome data, and lessons learned. The team won the award for Best Use of Quality Tools for the Team Showcase event during the Governor’s Sterling Award Banquet in June.

Both the application and stage presentation reflected improvements made by the Hot Shots in reducing the cycle time of the immunization process.

During strategic planning sessions and through customer surveys, the immunizations team identified a gap in performance from the cycle time required by the CHD customers. The cycle time was at 65 minutes, more than 3 times the 20 minutes that the customers wanted. A team was assembled to address the performance gap. A fishbone analysis revealed that not having a clear process and lack of marketing/customer information were the two main causes of long wait times. Interventions included developing a new process, training staff, marketing services, informing customers and hiring additional staff and obtaining volunteers to work as phone handlers, runners, and greeters during the back-to-school rush period. The gap was not only closed, but results surpassed the target with a cycle time of less than nine minutes.

This improvement contributed to a short wait time, eliminated lines, decreased staff frustration, improved customer and staff satisfaction, and saved the Duval CHD more than \$3,500 for the cost of overtime and security.

■ Duval County Health Department

miami-dade begins little haiti clinic

The Miami-Dade County Health Department celebrated the groundbreaking for the Little Haiti Clinic on June 29. Several department, local community leaders and state representatives attended the event that marks the beginning of a clinic centrally located to meet the health care needs of the area’s Haitian community.

Planning and construction dollars for the clinic were appropriated by the state Legislature during 1998 and 2001 sessions. Land was provided by Miami-Dade County. The clinic will be operated by the CHD.

“With the construction of the Little Haiti Clinic, the residents of this area will have the accessibility to quality health care services,” said Miami-Dade CHD Administrator Lillian Rivera, R.N., M.S.N. “The services that the Little Haiti Clinic will provide will be vitally important to the residents of Little Haiti and to our community.”

Rivera acknowledged local agencies, public officials and the health care community who have worked together to make this project a reality and enhance health services in Miami-Dade County. The CHD has served the health needs of the Little Haiti community through collaborative efforts with local providers.

■ Olga Connor, Miami-Dade County Health Department

people in public health

secretary agwunobi honored for improving health care through effective communications Secretary Agwunobi was honored recently by the Florida Society for Healthcare Public Relations and Marketing for his contributions for improving health care through effective communications.

The society awarded him its 2004 Jack Hardy Outstanding Healthcare Communicator of the Year at its meeting in July. Tallahassee Memorial Hospital nominated Secretary Agwunobi, citing his service as DOH Secretary. Award judges said they were impressed by Agwunobi's commitment to public health, his ability to communicate department initiatives to Floridians, and his tireless work for public health preparedness, and efforts such as Operation Vaccinate Florida.

The Jack Hardy Award was named after veteran health care communicator Jack Hardy, who worked in public relations for Halifax Hospital in Daytona Beach and Hill and Knowlton Public Relations firm in Atlanta and Tampa. He had been a leader in health care communications until he lost his battle with cancer.

deputy secretary named women's health officer Newly appointed Deputy Secretary Nancy Humbert, A.R.N.P., M.S.N., was also named Women's Health Officer recently, which adds oversight of the Office of Women's Health Strategy to her responsibilities. Humbert also serves as Chief Public Health Nurse for the department.

The Office of Women's Health Strategy will work on collaborations to better serve specific health care needs of women. Earlier this year, Governor Bush signed Senate Bill 2448, which advances the state's efforts to ensure that all Floridians are aware of significant women's health issues.

The Office of Women's Health Strategy aims to provide a multi-layered foundation to improve knowledge of women's health issues through collaboration with several state agencies. By means of research, recognition, and education the office will promote healthy ways of life to women. Among her duties, Humbert serves as chairwoman of the new Workgroup on Mammography Accessibility, a legislatively established study of mammography access, quality and related issues.

arnold moves to AHCA; keen appointed acting deputy secretary DOH Deputy Secretary Thomas W. "Tom" Arnold was recently appointed as Deputy Secretary for Medicaid with the department's sister agency, the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA). Arnold began his new role at AHCA in August.

Arnold served as an exemplary member of the Department of Health's leadership team since 1998.

DOH Inspector General Linda A. Keen, R.N., M.S., J.D., has been appointed Acting Deputy Secretary as of August 16 for a period of up to 180 days. As Acting Deputy Secretary, Keen oversees several department divisions and offices including: Administration; Disability Determinations, Information Technology; Medical Quality Assurance; Performance Improvement; and, Planning, Evaluation and Data Analysis, which includes Vital Statistics.

mahoney becomes division of administration director Gary Mahoney was recently appointed DOH Director of the Division of Administration. Mahoney most recently served as the Bureau Chief of Personnel and Human Resources Management. His wealth of experience in dealing with comprehensive administrative and management matters has been instrumental during his tenure as bureau chief, and will continue to be utilized in his new role.

As Director of Administration, Mahoney will oversee the bureaus of General Services; Personnel and Human Resources Management; Finance and Accounting; and Budget Management.

Mahoney, who holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Kent State University, has over 26 years of experience that included time with the Medicaid Program Office, as well as a variety of personnel positions with the former Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services.

FSHA names Schatteleyn school health nurse of year Sarasota County Health Department Nursing Program Specialist Lucia Schatteleyn, R.N., B.S.N., was named 2004 School Health Nurse of the Year by the Florida School Health Association (FSHA). Schatteleyn also received the Caring Hands recognition from the DOH Office of Public Health Nursing. Her background in public health spans three continents—Europe, Africa, and North America—with more than two decades as a public health nurse for Florida's School Health Program.

Schatteleyn serves as the primary resource on school health issues for her colleagues and for public and private schools in Sarasota County. Her responsibilities also include orientation for new school health nurses at Sarasota CHD. ■ Dianne Shipley, Sarasota CHD

sarasota nurse receives national scholarship Sarasota County Health Department school health nurse Susan Cicci-Coen, R.N., B.S.N., N.C.S.N., recently received a scholarship from the National Association of School Nurses Asthma Management Program. Cicci-Coen is one of 15 nurses selected from a field of 106 applicants to attend a train-the-trainer asthma management program in Seattle. Cicci-Coen will later travel to several health departments to share information vital to the health of at-risk children with other school health nurses.

She also is scheduled as a featured speaker on the subject at the Florida Foundation for School Health Conference next year. ■ Dianne Shipley, Sarasota CHD

state recognized for outstanding radiation safety protection The Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Inc., and the Organization of Agreement States recently commended Florida for providing more than 40 years of outstanding radiation safety programs, for regulating radiation sources in the state, and for participating in the Agreement State Program of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the past 40 years.

A certificate of recognition was sent in June to Governor Bush along with the letter that commended the work of Department of Health Radiation Control Program Director William Passeti and his staff members.

deals with "Unique Factors affecting Rural Counties in Florida and the United States that influence Funding Methodologies. Rural health outcomes are disparate to the urban populations. The question is: Is that okay? Do we care? If we do care about these disparities, what are we willing and able to do?"

Executive Nurse Fellow Alumni from DOH are Marie Riley, Nassau County Health Department Senior Community Health Nursing Director; Lillian Rivera, Administrator, Miami/Dade County Health Department, and Sharon Surrency, CMS Regional Nursing Director.

FEHA honors members with annual awards The Florida Environmental Health Association (FEHA) presented four members with awards in recognition of their efforts during its annual educational meeting in Orlando in July. They were:

Rookie of the Year for 2003–2004: Brian M. Schnarr, Environmental Specialist for the Santa Rosa County Health Department. The award recognizes a professional with less than 16 months of service who has exceeded minimum requirements, contributing in an outstanding way to the field of Environmental Health.



Schnarr

Outstanding Environmental Health Professional for 2003–2004: Jack Petenbrink, R.S., Environmental Specialist III at Palm Beach County Health Department. The award recognizes someone who has made a significant and successful contribution to environmental health during the past year.

Petenbrink, who has been working in public health for more than 30 years, applied the GIS/GPS technology in spatial analysis of cases of rabies in animals, as well as in the malaria investigations. The maps he created were tools for establishing the boundaries of health alerts.



Petenbrink

Charlie Rhodes Award recipient: Charles E. Luther, R.E.H.P., C.E.H.P., Environmental Manager for Volusia County Health Department. This award recognizes Registered Environmental Health

the advisor

Florida Department of Health
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin #C-24
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1711

Please send stories & information for the Nov./Dec. issue by e-mail to Juli Bergstrom-Wasson in the Office of Performance Improvement by Oct. 1, 2004. The Health Advisor is available on the DOH Intranet & Internet websites.
Phone: (850) 245-4444, ext. 4013 Fax: (850) 922-0462 e-mail: Juli_Bergstrom-Wasson@doh.state.fl.us
Suncom: 205-4007 Suncom Fax: 292-0462

DOH nurses are also RWJ executive nurse fellows Kudos to DOH nurses who also are current fellows or alumni of the Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellows Program. Each year, 20 nurses from across the country are selected for the program that provides advanced leadership training for nurses in senior executive roles who are helping to shape the future of the nation's health care system.

The fellowship program, now in its sixth year, is supported by a grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropic organization devoted exclusively to health and health care.

The department congratulates all the nurses, including Mary Hooshmand, R.N., M.S., Children's Medical Services (CMS) Region VII Nursing Director, who has recently been accepted to the three year program.

Hooshmand's project, "Telehealth Initiatives: Development and Implementation of a Public Private Partnership Model to provide Specialty Services for Children with Special Health Care Needs in Underserved Areas," aims to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of specialty services to high-risk children in underserved areas.

Patricia K. Dobbins, R.N., M.S., Executive Community Health Nursing Director at Hendry/Glades County Health Departments, is in her third of the program. Her project

Professionals for long term contributions and exemplary behavior. Over the past 23 years in the field, Luther's involvement includes president of the association, member of the National Environmental Health Association Advisory Committee for EPA Outreach and board member of the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA).

Billy G. Tennant recipient: Paul Minshew, R.S., Environmental Manager in the Volusia County Health Department. The award recognizes individuals for their long-term contribution to the field of environmental health. Minshew has over 28 years of service in all areas of environmental health, is a past president of FEHA and has held numerous other positions. He has held his Registered Sanitarian (R.S.) since 1987. He serves on the State of Florida Arbovirus Task Force, and is part of the Volusia County Epidemiology Team.



Luther



Minshew

■ Emily J. Wilson, Environmental Health