

HEPATITIS HEALTH

HEPATITIS AWARENESS DAY AT THE CAPITOL

On February 9th, the Bureau of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis Prevention Program sponsored *Hepatitis Awareness Day at the Capitol* to promote hepatitis awareness and education in all of Florida's 67 counties.

The bureau, along with various community partners, provided hepatitis educational materials and resource information on the second floor rotunda area of the Capitol in Tallahassee. One of the highlights of the day was a press conference featuring:

- DOH Secretary M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
- Russell W. Eggert, M.D., M.P.H., Director, DOH Div. of Disease Control
- Tom Liberti, Chief, DOH Bureau of HIV/AIDS/Hepatitis
- Michael Goodman, community member and local veteran

Topics that were discussed included the importance of hepatitis testing and vaccine, prevention methods, modes of transmission and risk factors. Secretary François encouraged all Floridians to get tested and know their "hepatitis status."

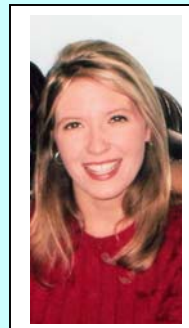


Tom Liberti, at the podium, introduced from left to right: Michael Goodman, Dr. François & Dr. Eggert.

More *Hep Day* photos on page 2.

NEW ALF DIRECTOR IN FLORIDA

Jennifer Bourgeois is the new Executive Director for the American Liver Foundation's (ALF) Gulf Coast Chapter in Tampa. Jennifer, who was born and raised in St. Petersburg, graduated from the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. Shortly after graduation, she worked for Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg as a Health Educator for community outreach. She later became responsible for cultivating corporate relationships and planning large fundraising events.



Jennifer Bourgeois

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HEPATITIS AWARENESS DAY AT THE CAPITOL FEBRUARY 9, 2006



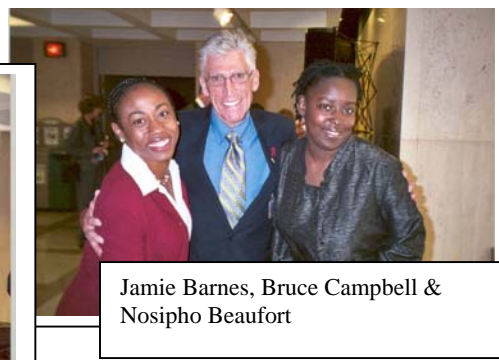
Left to right: Connie Victory, Julia Spears & Pam Langford



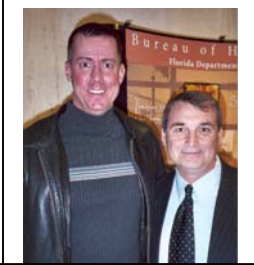
Mike Goodman being interviewed by a local reporter



Dr. François discusses the importance of getting tested for viral hepatitis.



Jamie Barnes, Bruce Campbell & Nosipho Beaufort



Jesse Fry from the AIDS Institute & Mike Goodman



Dr. Eggert talks about vaccines for hepatitis A & hepatitis B



Above: Laura Kearns & John Keegan from the Bureau of Immunization



The Fab Four: Cheryl Urbas, Phil Reichert, Nosipho Beaufort & April Crowley

Audience at Press Conference

NCSD TRAINING



Dana Cropper Williams with the NCSD & Chris Taylor from the Iowa Department of Public Health



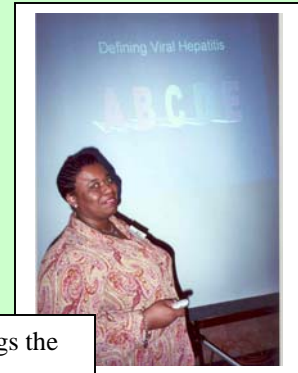
Left to right: Holly Wilson from the CDC & Kelly Mayor with NCSD

On March 8-10, the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD) sponsored *Integrating Viral Hepatitis into Client-Centered Counseling* in Orlando. Florida DOH staff that took part in this “training of trainers” course included Jamie Barnes and April Crowley with the Bureau of HIV/AIDS in Tallahassee, Nancy Borgsmiller from the Polk County Health Department (CHD), Thomas Drone from the Monroe CHD, Maureen Merckle from the Bay CHD and Komona McGriff-Hodge from the Lee CHD.

The goal of this workshop was to enhance the facilitation and training skills of participants who deliver viral hepatitis education and training. This interactive course focused on several areas including the ABCs of viral hepatitis (including hepatitis D and hepatitis E), functions of the liver, managing group dynamics, adult learning principles and giving and receiving feedback.



Jamie Barnes hugs Ronada Anderson, Hep C Coordinator with the Alabama Department of Public Health



Komona McGriff-Hodge sings the ABCs of viral hepatitis

Below standing left to right: Maureen Merckle & Thomas Drone. Sitting left to right: Nancy Borgsmiller & Komona McGriff-Hodge



Andi Thomas & Jon Kelly from Hep-C Alert

CDC RELEASES UPDATED VACCINE INFORMATION STATEMENT

On March 21, 2006, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) posted an updated hepatitis A Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) that takes into account the licensing of hepatitis A vaccines for children 12 months and older and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendation for routine hepatitis A vaccination of all children age one year. The previous hepatitis A VIS, dated 1/09/06, was an interim version.

To obtain a ready-to-copy (PDF) version of the hepatitis A VIS, go to: <http://www.immunize.org/vis/v-hepa.pdf>.

FLORIDA VIRAL HEPATITIS COUNCIL

The Florida Viral Hepatitis Council (VHC) met on February 22, 2006, in Tampa. Bob Keane from Pinellas CHD, Jennifer Bourgeois with ALF Gulf Coast Chapter, and Debbie Barnes from the Chance Center in Gulfport were welcomed as new members. There are currently two vacancies on the council that fall under “other governmental agencies.” The council is made up of 20 members from both the community and public health sector. At this meeting, the VHC identified three workgroups to provide research and recommendations on hepatitis vaccine issues, integrating risk assessment forms and resources for consumers and stakeholders.



Standing, left to right: William Chen, Susanne Crowe, Robert Keane, Andi Thomas, Robert Griffin, Jennifer Bourgeois, Charles Dennis and Phillip Styne. Sitting, left to right: Gina Bispham, Debbie Barnes, Barbara Rush and Michael Amidei.

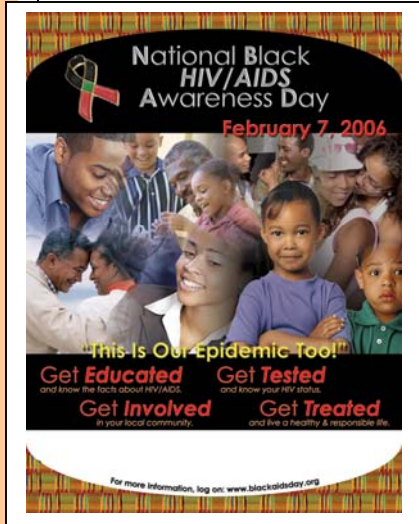
NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

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February 7, 2006, was National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD). This observance is a community mobilization effort that emphasizes the disproportionate impact that HIV/AIDS is having among blacks and encourages individuals to be counseled and tested for the virus. This was the sixth year the event took place nationally and in the state of Florida.

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day was conceived to encourage blacks to get educated about HIV/AIDS, get tested and know their HIV status and get involved in advocating for the resources necessary to fight the disease. During the course of NBHAAD, public awareness events such as press conferences, town hall meetings and rallies are held to make sure members of the black community are reached. Most importantly, HIV testing is offered.

During the past six years, there has been a 30% decrease of HIV cases among blacks in Florida. HIV cases in Florida have dropped 24% among black men and 36% among black women.



Cheryl Urbas

**Soap and water and
common sense are the
best disinfectants.**

--William Osler

IT'S TIME! INTEGRATE VIRAL HEPATITIS INTO YOUR WORK Training-of-Trainers (TOT) Program

Phil Reichert and Cheryl Urbas attended a training-of-trainers (TOT) on viral Hepatitis in Atlanta, GA, on March 22-23, 2006. The TOT was conducted by the New York State Department of Health National Viral Hepatitis Training Center, which is funded by the CDC. The goal of the two-day TOT is to create a national network of trainers with the knowledge, skills, information and resources needed to offer "It's Time! Integrate Viral Hepatitis Into Your Work" training in their geographic area. The TOT is designed to prepare health and human service professionals to train non-clinical colleagues on various aspects pertaining to viral hepatitis.

One of the main objectives of this training is to promote strategies for integrating viral hepatitis services in settings that serve people at high risk, including HIV/AIDS programs, STD Clinics, substance abuse programs and jails and prisons. More information will be forthcoming about such trainings to be held in Florida.

DAYTONA BIKE WEEK HCV Testing Event

From March 3 through March 12, 2006, hepatitis C advocates from across the United States joined together with Hep-C ALERT to conduct one of the largest public hepatitis C screening events ever held. Over 900 people got tested for hepatitis C during Bike Week in Daytona Beach.

For more details, visit <http://hep-c-alert.org/daytonabikeweek.htm>



Major Baker

JENNETT BAKER RECEIVES ARMY KUDOS

The United States Army recently awarded the Army Commendation Medal to **Major Jennett Baker**, RN, BSN, Bureau of HIV/AIDS, Medical Section, for her meritorious service while serving the United States military for 16 years. This is the second time Major Baker has had this honor bestowed upon her. The Commendation Medal goes on to say that her “mentoring skills, nursing knowledge and leadership have impacted the readiness of the 345th Combat Support Hospital and reflect great credit upon herself, the 345th Combat Support Hospital, her country and the United States Army.”

Major Baker served in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm from 1990 - 91. In 1999, she served in Filsen, Germany, as officer in charge of a health clinic. She also participated in a humanitarian mission to Peru where she was officer in charge of an intermediate care ward.

The Army Commendation Medal is awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the United States who, while serving in any capacity with the Army, distinguish themselves by heroism, outstanding achievement or meritorious service.

BUREAU WELCOMES LEISHA MCKINLEY

On March 10, 2006, Leisha McKinley joined the Prevention Section in the Bureau of HIV/AIDS as a Prevention Program Advisor. Leisha brings several years of experience in community planning, serving as the community co-chair of the Florida Community Planning Group (now known as Florida Comprehensive Planning Network). She also brings program development and implementation experience from the community level, which will be an asset to providing technical assistance to the bureau’s community partners.



Leisha McKinley

HEPATITIS SURVEILLANCE REPORT

The Florida Hepatitis Surveillance Report presents statistics and trends about viral hepatitis in Florida from January 1, 1985, through December 31, 2004. This publication, which summarizes viral hepatitis case reports received from county health departments, laboratories and other public and private providers, is intended as a reference document for policymakers, program managers, health planners, researchers and others who are concerned with the public health impact of these diseases. A copy of the report can be found at: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/aids/hep/index.html.

NOTES FROM THE NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION CONFERENCE IN ATLANTA, MARCH 2006

BY PHIL REICHERT



I attended the National Immunization Conference in Atlanta with the idea that I would listen to what the speakers had to say about immunization programs, and to think about how we might apply those thoughts and ideas to Florida's Hepatitis Program. The conference was held at the Omni-CNN Center just adjacent to Atlanta's Olympic Centennial Park. Several of the sessions dealt with hepatitis vaccines either directly or peripherally. Below are my notes on how you may apply this to your program.

Some of what follows may seem like common-sense, no-brainer information, but it never hurts to reiterate the obvious. And sometimes, it feels good to hear information you know to be true as a reminder that you are doing the right thing.

Even though Florida has integrated hepatitis services into other programs during the past several years, there is always room for improvement. Training STD and HIV workers to provide counseling and testing services to do a hepatitis risk assessment and to offer clients hepatitis testing and vaccination makes good public health sense.

We need to ensure that vaccines are always used before they expire. Vaccines should be rotated so that the ones with the shortest expiration dates are used first. It is very important to check expiration dates regularly, and make arrangements to transfer short-dated vaccines to a county health department where they will be used. There is currently no reason to hoard vaccines (i.e., do not save them for a rainy day), since we can supply you with what you need to run your programs. Some immunization programs in several other states have hoarded vaccines "just in case they are needed." Unfortunately, many had to be destroyed because that proverbial "rainy day" never came.

Clinicians often have a problem getting clients to return for their second hepatitis A vaccine dose and their second and third in the hepatitis B series. Suggestions for compliance were: give the client a reminder card at their first visit that has a specific return date. Incentives may be given upon return visits (let the client know during the first visit that if they return for their second dose, there will be a gift—maybe a grocery store gift card). Please do not call the state office asking for more money to buy incentive items. This suggestion is for those funded counties that are already able to do that. Tickler files should be kept on each client who began the hepatitis A or B series. Clients may be called or mailed a reminder of subsequent visits.

STD clinics are universally seen as an excellent venue for hepatitis B vaccine to be delivered to high-risk individuals.

Hepatitis prevention services should be provided in non-traditional settings; jails and prisons, community-based non-profit organizations and Veteran's Administration hospitals. These are some of the places with the highest risk of hepatitis B and C. In order to reach the populations at highest risk, sometimes services need to be offered outside of regular office hours (at night and on week-ends). In general, all vaccines pose a risk to some people, but not being vaccinated poses a greater risk to the general population.



Phil Reichert

VIRAL HEPATITIS INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

ORGANIZATION	WEB SITE	PHONE
American Liver Foundation	www.liverfoundation.org	800-Go-Liver
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Hepatitis Branch	www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/c/index.htm	888-443-7232
Hepatitis B Foundation	www.hepb.org	215-489-4900
Hepatitis C Connection	www.hepc-connection.org	800-522-4372
Hepatitis C Harm Reduction Project	www.hepcproject.org	
Hepatitis C Support Project	www.hcvadvocate.org	415-978-2400
Hepatitis-Central	www.hepatitis-central.org	
Hepatitis Foundation International	www.hepfi.org	800-891-0707
HIV and Hepatitis.com	www.hivandhepatitis.com	
Immunization Action Coalition	www.immunize.org	651-647-9009
Latino Organization for Liver Awareness	www.lola-national.org	888-367-LOLA
National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project	www.natap.org	888-26-NATAP
National Center For Complimentary and Alternative Medicine Information	http://nccam.nih.gov/health/hepatitisc/	
National Institutes of Health	http://medlineplus.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/hepatitisc.html	
Veterans Affairs – Centers for Excellence in Hepatitis C Research and Education	http://hepatitis.va.gov/	800-827-1000

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Hepatitis Health is brought to you by the Hepatitis Prevention Program in the Division of Disease Control, Bureau of HIV/AIDS at the Florida Department of Health. We want to know what you are doing in your community to prevent viral hepatitis. Please submit your articles and photos to: April.Crowley@doh.state.fl.us

Don't stop now.
There's one more
page to read!

Florida Prepares for Pandemic Flu

By Phil Reichert

The Florida Department of Health and the federal Department of Health and Human Services sponsored the Pandemic Readiness and Emergency Planning Summit on February 16, 2006 at the Tallahassee-Leon Civic Center. DOH Secretary Dr. Rony François facilitated and introduced several VIP speakers including, Governor Jeb Bush, HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt, CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding, Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary Alfonso Martinez-Fonts, DOH Deputy State Health Officer Dr. Bonita Sorensen and DOH Deputy Secretary Nancy Humbert. This summit was broadcast statewide via satellite teleconferencing. Over 700 healthcare and other workers attended the live session in Tallahassee.

The summit presenters talked about how you can personally prepare for what could be a worldwide influenza epidemic, whether it is bird flu (H5N1) or any other flu epidemic comparable to the 1918 worldwide one or the ones that spanned the globe in 1957 and 1968, which killed over 42 million individuals around the world, including over 604,000 Americans.



CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding



Governor Bush

HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt



Dr. Sorensen

Dr. François



Take-home messages included the following. What is the best way to limit the spread of germs? 1) Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, 2) Stay home from work or school if you are sick, 3) Avoid contact with people who are sick, 4) Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth and 5) Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze...then, wash your hands again.

Additionally, you can do several things to prepare for the pandemic flu: 1) Fill any prescriptions several days before you run out, 2) Make financial plans for loss of income if your workplace is closed, 3) Plan for the care of loved ones, 4) Store canned foods and dry goods that do not need to be cooked, 5) Store bottled water, 6) Buy extra batteries and keep a radio on hand and 7) Keep yourself informed.

For more information about this subject, check out www.pandemicflu.gov