

# Hepatitis Health

## Something to Crowe About!

On August 6, 2009, **Susanne Crowe** was awarded the Robert D. May Award by the Florida Public Health Association (FPHA). This honor is given annually to a public health worker and FPHA member who has demonstrated significant accomplishments advancing public health at the local or state level.

Susanne is an administrator with the Bureau of Laboratories in Jacksonville and member of the Florida Viral Hepatitis Council.



Susanne Crowe

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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## Employee of the Year

Congratulations to **Pat Simmons** for being named DOH Employee of the Year for the Division of Disease Control! Pat was one of 15 employees that were recognized at an awards breakfast on December 18, 2009, in the Surgeon General's office. Pat is a counseling and testing field representative in the Bureau of HIV/AIDS and serves on the Florida Viral Hepatitis Council.



Pat Simmons

The Employee of the Year Award is an initiative designed by Surgeon General Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H., and Chief of Staff Rob Siedlecki to demonstrate their appreciation for employees who have displayed excellence in their work performance and productivity, initiative, integrity, dependability, cooperation, and customer service.



### Trivia

He was a famous author known as a "Merry Prankster" in the 1960s. He died in 2001 from HCV complications.

*Find the answer on page 10.*



## We Have New Posters!

The Hepatitis Prevention Program has brand new posters for hepatitis A, B, and C, and they're free! With the new year, we decided we needed a new look. Check these out, especially the HCV one that features information about co-infection with HIV. The posters are 11 x 17 and come in groups of 50. To place your order, email Jessi Embleton at [jessi\\_embleton@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:jessi_embleton@doh.state.fl.us).

**Hepatitis A (HAV)**

**you are at risk if:**

- You have had food or water contaminated with human waste (fecal matter)
- You have had close personal contact with an infected person
- You have had chronic liver disease

**protect yourself:**

- Get vaccinated for hepatitis A
- Always cook fish and seafood completely
- Wash your hands
- After using the bathroom or changing a diaper
- Before preparing or eating food

Hepatitis A is a liver disease. **Be good to your liver.**

HEALTH For more information, contact your local health department.

**Hepatitis C (HCV)**

**HIV is spread by blood-to-blood contact. Get tested if you:**

- Received a blood transfusion before 1992.
- Ever injected and/or inhaled drugs (even once, many years ago).
- Had clotting factor concentrates before 1987.
- Had long-term hemodialysis.

**THERE IS NO VACCINE FOR HCV. IF YOU HAVE HEPATITIS C, GET VACCINATED FOR HEPATITIS A AND B.**

**HIV & HCV Co-Infection**

- Persons with HIV, especially injection drug users, may also be infected with hepatitis C.
- Hepatitis C is more serious in persons with HIV because it leads to liver damage more quickly.
- Many persons with hepatitis C don't have any symptoms.

HCV is a liver disease. **Be good to your liver.**

HEALTH For more information, contact your local health department.

**ADAP** ADAP is a free hepatitis C drug assistance program.

**Hepatitis B (HBV)**

**hepatitis B spreads by:**

- Having contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person
- Sharing injection drug equipment
- Having unprotected sex
- Sharing personal items like razors

**protect yourself:**

- ABSTINENCE is the best way to protect yourself
- Get vaccinated for hepatitis B
- Always use a condom when having sex
- Avoid sharing injection drug needles, tattoo needles

Hepatitis B is a liver disease. **Be good to your liver.**

HEALTH For more information, contact your local health department.

Please note that objects on this page appear to be much smaller than they really are.

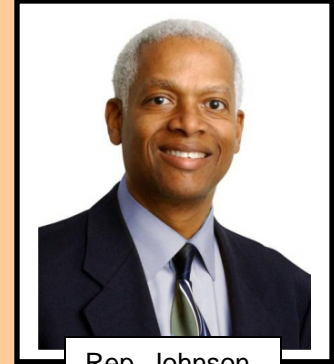
Special thanks to Kathy Franklin, a graphic artist in the Department of Health's Office of Marketing, for designing these posters.

## Georgia Congressman Reveals That He Has Hepatitis C

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/12/07/hank-johnson-georgia-cong\\_n\\_383233.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/12/07/hank-johnson-georgia-cong_n_383233.html)

Representative **Hank Johnson**, D-Ga., has revealed that he has hepatitis C. In recent months, the 55-year-old Johnson has appeared thin and frail. The two-term Atlanta-area congressman said in a statement that he has been undergoing rigorous treatment to eradicate the disease, which was first diagnosed in 1998. He said the treatment is going well and that he has been free of the hepatitis C virus for almost a year.

Johnson said he doesn't know how he contracted the virus, which is spread through contact with infected blood. He said he plans to use his public profile to raise awareness of the disease.



Rep. Johnson

### **Rep. Johnson's Statement on Hepatitis C, December 7, 2009:**

Over the past year, I have been on a robust course of treatment for hepatitis C (HCV), a virus that affects more than 4 million Americans. I am pleased to announce that my therapy is progressing well. My physician is encouraged by my response to treatment and expects complete success eradicating the virus.

I hope that my disclosure will provide others suffering from HCV with confidence to speak out and educate the community about this illness. Through clinical trials and medical research, we must always seek new, more effective treatments. I plan to use my position as a public figure to raise awareness of the consequences of this infection and let others fighting hepatitis know that it is possible to succeed and excel while battling this disease.

The causes of this disease are many, but in the end it does not matter how someone contracted the virus. Like so many millions of others, I was infected many years without ever knowing how I contracted it.

In fact, more than half the people who have hepatitis C don't know how or when they contracted it. And many are fearful of the treatment regimen that impacts your life in unusual ways. Having come through a long course of treatment, I want to send a strong message that a cure is possible but you must be tested and treated.

I will be working with the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR) to help educate my colleagues and the public to learn more about this largely misunderstood disease. It is treatable, but we must devote the will and resources it deserves in light of the urgent need.

Though this infection has caused me some discomfort and frustration, it has in no way affected my ability to legislate and serve my constituents. My record of attendance at votes and in committee meetings is outstanding. I have passed three major bills in this year alone. As Chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts and Competition Policy, I have led an active and effective committee. And as Southeast Regional Whip in the House leadership I played a significant role in rallying my colleagues support for historic health reform.

Today, I also announce that I will co-sponsor legislation offered by several of my colleagues in October, 2009 – H.R. 3974 – which would establish, promote, and support a comprehensive prevention, education, research and medical referral program for viral hepatitis infection.

It is a testament to the 111th Congress that we have men and women willing to stand up for average Americans and their families who have been impacted by hepatitis C and related illnesses. It is also gratifying that this is a bi-partisan bill because disease respects no socio-economic status, party or political philosophy.

## Shine a Light on.....Lori Theisen, RN, Orange CHD

I was born in Morgantown, West Virginia (yes, I am a hillbilly), and raised in Winter Haven, Florida. My mother was a nursing instructor at Polk Community College, and my father was the Radiology Administrator for Winter Haven Hospital for 30 years.

My sister, Toni, is an RN, too, but enjoys a career as a pet sitter. I have two children: Joel, 21, a student at the University of North Florida, and Ali, 18, a senior at Deland High School. We have five dogs (two Great Danes, one hound dog, a terrier/beagle, and a mini Daschund), three fish, and one creepy cat.

I have an associates degree in Nursing from Polk Community College and a bachelors degree in Nursing from the University of Central Florida (UCF). I also attended Troy State University in Alabama.

Except for working at Volusia County Health Department (CHD) for eight months in 2004-2005, I have been with the Orange CHD my entire life. Well, almost my entire life. I've been here over 24 years! I was doing my clinical rotation at the health department while in the UCF nursing program and fell in love with public health. I did my internship here, and started working at Orange CHD three days after graduation!

I love the Hepatitis Prevention Program because I feel it is true public health. My favorite part about the job is teaching and counseling patients one-on-one, and doing work in the field.

In my spare time, I prefer to be outside. I have a beach (sand) volleyball court in my backyard and play a couple times a week. I also enjoy walking and bike riding. I love to be with my children and my animals. I like to putter around in the garden and am really excited about my collard greens!

This time of year, I mostly just read devotions. I tend to read more in the winter, and my favorite author is Janet Evanovich. Her novels are hilarious! I don't really watch very much TV. My favorite movie is ELF. (I really like comedies.)



L to R, Lori's Family: Dad Tony, baby "sister" Abby on his lap, daughter Ali, son Joel, and mom Julia.



Above Nurse Lori (age 2) gives a shot to her 4-year-old sister, Toni. Now, that's what we call "role playing"! That fake blood is very realistic.

## Ignoring Prisoners' Health Imperils Community

By Dr. John P. May, Special to the *Miami Herald*  
<http://www.miamiherald.com/business/story/1346403.html>



Dr. May

Meeting the health needs of some of the sickest and most complex patients in our community is the responsibility and privilege of those who deliver healthcare in jails and prisons. Like those in uniform who also protect and serve, these healthcare providers must maintain professionalism, integrity, competency and ethics in challenging environments that are often ill-designed for healing and far from therapeutic. These healthcare providers advocate for and deliver services in the best interests of their inmate patients. The community ought to appreciate and support these efforts, even if only because the community's own health and safety ultimately benefit when proper care is given to inmates.

The impact of incarceration on public health is significant. Incarcerated populations are known to have high rates of transmissible diseases because of preexisting problems including poor access to healthcare, high risk lifestyles and living in close quarters. Frequently landing in jail or prison marks the first time these individuals have had access to medical services, mental health treatment and dental care. Often substance addiction complicates disease processes and treatments.

Each year in the United States more than 12 million people are released from jails and prisons. A slightly larger number enter each year, owing to a steady increase in our jail and prison populations. This is an important intervention point for screening, treating and preventing disease. A report to the U.S. Congress by the National Commission on Correctional Healthcare shows an estimated 98,500 to 145,500 inmates released from U.S. prisons and jails in 1996 were HIV carriers. Another 38,500 had AIDS, and an additional 155,000 were infected with hepatitis B while another 1.3 million to 1.4 million were infected with hepatitis C. In Florida, an HIV test is mandatory prior to leaving the state's prison system and is typically available to jail and prison inmates upon request, along with other preventive health information. Women are screened for cervical and breast cancer, while men are tested for prostate cancer. Vaccinations are administered, along with other preventive healthcare.

Failure to identify and treat disease among prisoners and failure to provide a continuum of health and social services to those transitioning from jail or prison perpetuates disease and disenfranchisement, resulting in higher healthcare costs for everyone. Through an adequate jail or prison-based health program of disease screening, treatment and discharge planning, the negative impact of health conditions that affect the public can be minimized.

Nonetheless, healthcare for inmates is often rejected by both the public and public officials. Had it not been for a Supreme Court judgment ruling that prisoners have a right to adequate healthcare, few would receive it at all. And this despite the fact that the purpose of jails and prisons is public safety, and part of public safety is protecting the public's health.

The physician's creed -- in Latin *primum non nocere* or "first, do no harm" -- guides those of us providing healthcare to incarcerated persons to build care systems that meet our patients' needs and ensure that during their incarceration they are not vulnerable to health deterioration. The task is not easy, and it's made more difficult by those who do not value our mission. If only for reasons of self-interest, prison healthcare deserves public support. Assigning disparate values to the lives of prisoners in comparison with those of the general public puts the community in peril. Infectious diseases do not respect the boundaries of prison walls, nor can we forget that the prisoner will once again walk among us.

**Note:** Dr. John P. May is chief medical officer at Armor Correctional Health Services. This article appeared in the *Miami Herald* on November 23, 2009.

## YEAR IN REVIEW, AND HELLO 2010

By Phil Reichert

Here is a list some of the things you (our faithful readers) helped the Hepatitis Prevention Program (HPP) accomplish in 2009. It is by no means all-inclusive, but represents only highlights.

### HEPATITIS PREVENTION PROGRAM 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

- Through the Hepatitis 09 Program, the county health departments (CHDs) provided 35,154 hepatitis A, B, and A/B combination vaccines to at-risk individuals from Dec. 1, 2008 through Nov. 30, 2009.
- During that same 12-month period, the state lab performed 36,067 hepatitis panel tests on behalf of the HPP.
- From Jan. 1 – Nov. 30, 2009, there were 18,010 chronic hepatitis C cases reported into Merlin. There have now been 165,760 chronic hepatitis C cases reported since reporting began in 2000. That is 56.5% of the estimated 293,253 cases believed to exist in Florida.
- The CHDs reached tens of thousands of individuals at risk for viral hepatitis with education and information messages.
- The HPP participated in Hepatitis Day at the Capitol on Mar. 17, which included exhibits, hepatitis A and B vaccine, and a press conference.
- April Crowley provided five Hepatitis 101 conference call trainings in 2009 and trained nearly 200 healthcare providers. She also produced and distributed nine issues of the *Hepatitis Health* newsletter.
- The HPP participated in a World TB Day event in Tallahassee on Mar. 24.
- I was invited to provide hepatitis presentations to the following: 1) the Annual Pharmacology Conference at Florida A & M University in Tallahassee in Feb., 2) the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual HIV Positive Living Conference in Ft. Walton Beach in Mar., and 3) the National Immunization Conference in Dallas in Mar.
- Several of the funded CHDs held events to observe World Hepatitis Day on May 19, including the Pinellas CHD, which partnered with the state HPP to hold a statewide event.
- Dena Hall completed the 2002-2006 Five-Year Hepatitis Surveillance Report and completed monthly surveillance runs of Merlin data for the Monthly Surveillance Report.
- The HPP and the Bureau of Epidemiology partnered to participate in a national survey that reviewed hepatitis surveillance programs.
- We were able to conduct two Viral Hepatitis Council meetings in 2009, one in Tampa and the other in Orlando.
- Nosipho Beaufort and I achieved one of the statewide objectives by providing five technical assistance and training site visits.
- Nosipho prepared the 2010 plan for the CDC 317 Adult Hepatitis Vaccine Initiative, and completed quarterly reports on 2009 317 vaccine use.
- Ft. Lauderdale hosted the first Hepatitis Coordinators' Meeting in more than 16 months in Sept.
- I participated in a hepatitis awareness event developed and hosted by the Center for Drug-Free Living and the Orange CHD staff in Orlando in Oct.
- The HPP reviewed the program goals and objectives to provide annual and interim progress reports to the CDC.
- I was invited to participate in the review of the upcoming Institute of Medicine hepatitis report and recommendations (to be released in Jan. 2010).

Well, obviously, there are many more duties and activities that were performed in 2009. These are only a sample. And, what are some of the highlights we can look forward to in 2010?

More on Page 7

## Year in Review continued...

- The HPP will request to have a statewide hepatitis educational conference in late 2010. We have requested to have a conference in 2008 and 2009, but due to budget and travel restrictions, these were not approved.
- The HPP has asked CDC for \$1.6 million for 317 Initiative adult hepatitis B and A/B combination vaccine in 2010. We will hear what the approved amount is in January.
- The Institute of Medicine's "A National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Hepatitis B and C" report and recommendations is scheduled for release on Jan. 11, 2010.
- The HPP will work on a five-year hepatitis report covering 2004-2008.
- The HPP will work with CDC to write an article on Florida's experience with the 317 Vaccine Initiative for the professional journal, *Public Health Reports*.
- We have an opportunity to spread viral hepatitis awareness through several local events and a statewide event in Tallahassee during World Hepatitis Day on May 19. Activities will include development of mayoral and gubernatorial proclamations, a statewide press release, and local and statewide press conferences.
- AND, 2000 was the first year the Department of Health had a funded hepatitis program. So, 2010 will be the tenth anniversary of the program. I invite everyone to e-mail Hepatitis Program highlights from the past decade to me at [phil\\_reichert@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:phil_reichert@doh.state.fl.us).

Again, this does not cover everything. Each of the funded hepatitis program staff in the local CHDs has the talent, skills, and experience to help us make an impact on the spread of viral hepatitis in 2010. Thanks to all of you, and keep up the great work!

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## Scientists Find Why Hepatitis B Hits Men Harder Than Women

<http://www.medindia.net/news>

The long-standing mystery of why the hepatitis B virus (HBV) hits men harder than women may be explained by a new discovery.

The virus targets men more readily than women, triggering serious complications like cirrhosis and liver cancer. Men infected with HBV are also six times more likely than women to develop a chronic form of the disease.

About 400 million people worldwide have chronic hepatitis B, including a form that is highly infectious and can be transmitted through blood, saliva and sexual contact.

In lab experiments with mice, Chinese researchers found abnormal forms of a protein, apolipoprotein A-I (Apo A-I), in the livers of infected male mice but not infected females.

They then identified abnormal forms of these Apo A-I proteins in the blood of men infected with HBV, but not in women.

The researchers suggest that besides explaining the gender differences, the proteins may provide important markers for tracking the progression of hepatitis B.

The study has been published online in American Chemical Society's (ACS) *Journal of Proteome Research*.

# EASY C FACTS



by Alan Franciscus

## Vibrio

If you have hepatitis C (HCV or Hep C for short) you should avoid eating raw or undercooked shellfish – oysters, clams, and mussels. *Vibrio vulnificus* (*Vibrio* for short) is a bacteria that lives in warm salty water. In addition to getting *Vibrio* from eating raw or undercooked shellfish, you can also get it from swallowing water with *Vibrio* in it or *Vibrio* can enter the body when you have any open cuts or wounds when you are wading in or swimming in water that contains *Vibrio*.

The most common symptoms of *Vibrio* are diarrhea, stomach aches and cramping, feeling sick to the stomach, vomiting, fever, and chills and can occur anytime between 5 hours to 4 days. In severe cases you can have a drop in blood pressure and open sores that do not heal. If you think you have been exposed to *Vibrio*, see a doctor as soon as possible because the infection can be very serious and may even lead to death.

### *It is important to remember....*

- ◆ Do not eat any raw oysters of other types of shellfish
- ◆ Cook any shellfish thoroughly – if the shellfish does not open during cooking – do not eat it
- ◆ Clean up any fluids while preparing the shellfish – do not let anything come into contact with anything else that touched the shellfish – this includes hands, knives, spoons, surface areas, etc.
- ◆ Wear gloves when cleaning shellfish
- ◆ Wash hands thoroughly after handling shellfish
- ◆ Cover any open cuts or wounds – never wade in warm salty water if you have an open cut or wound
- ◆ Seek immediate medical attention if you have been exposed

[www.hcvadvocate.org](http://www.hcvadvocate.org)



Version 1.0, 2009

## The Hepatitis Prevention Program Year in Pictures – 2009



**Viral Hepatitis Council – February**



**Hepatitis Day at the Capitol – March**



**World Hepatitis Day – St. Pete – May**



**World TB Day – Governor Crist & April**



**Nat'l Immunization Conf in Dallas**



**Site Visits (Inc: Lydia in Pensacola)**



**Viral Hepatitis Council – August**



**Hepatitis Coordinators' Mtg. – Sept.**



**Hepatitis Awareness Event – Orlando**



**Your Tallahassee Staff in June 2004...**



**...and in April 2009**

## Ken Kesey

Kenneth Elton Kesey was an American author, best known for his debut novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and as a counter-cultural figure who, some consider, was a link between the Beat Generation of the 1950s and the hippies of the 1960s.

"I was too young to be a beatnik, and too old to be a hippie," Ken Kesey said in a 1999 interview with Robert K. Elder.

Ken Kesey was born in La Junta, Colorado, and brought up in Eugene, Oregon. He studied at the University of Oregon, where he acted in college plays. Upon graduating he won a scholarship to Stanford University. Kesey soon dropped out and joined the counterculture movement.

The film adaptation of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* gained a huge success. Kirk Douglas had bought the right to Kesey's novel; he played the role of McMurphy on Broadway in an adaptation by Dale Wasserman. It ran for 82 performances at the Cort Theater during the 1963-64 season. When he failed to interest a studio in the project, he finally turned the package over to his son, Michael. Marlon Brando and Gene Hackman refused the role, which eventually went to Jack Nicholson. The film was made in one wing of the Oregon State Hospital.

Kesey's next novel, *Sometimes a Great Notion* (1964), was also made into a film, this time directed by Paul Newman. The story was set in a logging community and centered on two brothers and their bitter rivalry in the family.



The "Further" bus in 1964.



Ken Kesey in front of the "Further" bus many years later.

After *Sometimes a Great Notion*, Kesey gave up publishing novels. He formed a band of "Merry Pranksters," set up a commune in La Honda, California, bought an old school bus (and named it "Further"), and toured America and Mexico with his friends. Dressed in a jester's outfit, Kesey was the chief prankster. Tom Wolfe's 1968 book, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, describes the 1964 bus trip that Kesey and the Merry Pranksters took from Oregon to New York to visit, among others, Timothy Leary and Jack Kerouac.

In the early 1970s Kesey returned to writing and published *Kesey's Garage Sale* (1973). His later works include the children's book, *Little Tricker the Squirrel Meets Big Double the Bear* (1990), and *Sailor Song* (1992), a futuristic tale about an Alaskan fishing village and Hollywood film crew. *Last Go Around* (1994), Kesey's last book, was an account of a famous Oregon rodeo written in the form of pulp fiction. Kesey died of complications after surgery for **liver cancer** caused by **hepatitis C** on November 10, 2001 in Eugene, Oregon.

Speaking of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, I was in the stage version in 1977 at the Manatee Players in Bradenton, Florida. I played Candy Starr, one of McMurphy's (Jack Nicholson's character in the movie) girlfriends who seduced patient Billy Bibbit during the infamous party scene. In the picture below left, I'm backstage holding the script in one hand and a bottle of whiskey in the other. In the picture on the right, I'm rehearsing a scene with Billy, who was played by Scott Isert.

----April Crowley



**Hepatitis Health** is brought to you by the Hepatitis Prevention Program, Bureau of HIV/AIDS, Division of Disease Control, at the Florida Department of Health. Submit your articles and photos to:

[April.Crowley@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:April.Crowley@doh.state.fl.us)



The Hepatitis Unit at the Polk County Health Department gets into the holiday spirit! Sitting in front, L to R, are June Blum and Lynn Simons. Standing, L to R: Kim Leal, Julie Krause, Mr. Frostv. and Pamela Richardson.

