

the health advisor

DOH Mission:

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

July/August 2006

Office of Performance Improvement

DOH Partners with Federal, State, Local Agencies and Nonprofit Organizations to Promote Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning Prevention

County Health Departments Encouraged to Spread Message Among Local Communities

In an unprecedented show of collaboration, key staff from the Florida Department of Health (DOH) joined local, federal and nonprofit allies to highlight the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning and the importance of generator safety at a recent press conference in Tallahassee. The timely subject drew substantial media coverage, spotlighting efforts to spread prevention messages that save lives and prevent fatal injuries during hurricane season. The united front included representatives from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Tallahassee Fire Department, the Florida Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons and the Florida Department of Elderly Affairs.

A primary theme echoed throughout the event was the importance of collaborative partnerships at the community level. "We encourage county health departments (CHDs) to host similar press events in their areas, and reach out to the communities in their care," said Fernando Senra, DOH spokesman. "With so many generators purchased each year, we all must do our part in making sure that safety is the number one priority."

Senra sees the promotion of these safety messages as not only a way to save lives locally, but a great method for uniting city partners like local fire officials who are willing to assist. At the press conference, local Tallahassee fire trucks provided a great backdrop for television crews. They even staged demonstrations using actual portable generators to show attendees how to properly use them.

As part of a statewide campaign, outreach materials have been distributed to CHDs throughout Florida. The educational materials include template press releases, public service announcements, fact sheets, stickers and door hangers with the imprinted prevention message.

Key messages focus on the fact that generators quickly produce high carbon monoxide (CO) levels that may cause death. You also can't see or smell CO, since it is odorless. To stay safe, Floridians and visitors should follow these preventative steps:

- **NEVER** use a generator indoors or in partially enclosed spaces like garages
- **OPENING** doors and windows or using fans **WILL NOT** prevent CO poisoning
- **LOCATE** generators outdoors, away from doors, windows, vents that attach to the side of your house, and air conditioning units that could pull the CO indoors
- **USE** battery-operated CO alarms in your home that have met the latest safety standards
- **FOLLOW** the manufacturer's instructions for generators and CO alarms
- **TEST** CO alarms frequently
- **GET** fresh air **IMMEDIATELY** if you feel sick, dizzy or weak and call your Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222

Contacts for additional information: Office of Injury Prevention (Division of Health Access & Tobacco), Lisa Vanderwerf-Hourigan, 850-245-4444, ext. 2776; Indoor Air Toxics Program (Division of Environmental Health), Tim Wallace, 1-800-543-8279; and the Office of Communications, Fernando Senra, 850-245-4111. ■



Florida Convenes State Leaders to Advance Women's Health

In Our Best Interest

A recent state report indicates that the leading causes of mortality among Florida women are preventable, and that several socioeconomic factors play a role in Florida women's limited access to comprehensive healthcare. Florida is responding to these challenges with an integrated, multidisciplinary, lifespan approach to women's healthcare.

The Florida DOH Women's Health Initiative hosted the first Governor's Conference for Women's Health this May in Orlando during National Women's Health Week. The conference brought together legislators, officials from state agencies, providers, consumer representatives and advocates with the aim of improving their understanding of factors affecting women's lifelong health. Some specific topics were aimed at increasing participants' knowledge of disparities in health outcomes among female Floridians, and their recognition that women's health encompasses more than physical health. The theme of this year's conference was Building the Agenda for Women's Healthcare in Florida.

"The Governor's Conference for Women's Health provided an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the important health issues that are gender-specific to women," said DOH Secretary M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D. "We need to understand why there are large differences in how women and men experience certain diseases, and how long-term medical research can address these issues."

The conference featured an update on the health

status of women in Florida and presentations on the impact of women's health on the well-being of children and society as a whole, women's access to healthcare, women's health problems across the lifespan, social and environmental determinants of health, best and promising practices in women's health and health disparities. Conference faculty included many leaders in maternal and child health, including Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) alumnus Charles Mahan, M.D. During the conference, a policy group of key stakeholders met to develop recommendations for Florida's women's health strategic plan. The policy group presented their recommendations to participants at the conclusion of the conference.

The conference was planned as part of a Florida law enacted in 2004. Section 381.04015, Florida Statutes, established the title and role of officer of women's health strategy in the DOH to address explicitly the health of women across the lifespan and made Florida one of 18 states that legislatively mandate women's health activities. According to the law, "public policy must take into account the distinct characteristics of women's health issues," and "priority shall be given to improve the overall health

status of women through research and education on women's health issues." Deputy Secretary Nancy Humbert, A.R.N.P., M.S.N. is Florida's women's health officer.

"I am honored to serve as Florida's first women's health officer," said Deputy Secretary Humbert.

"The challenges facing women's health today are daunting and require an aggressive and comprehensive approach. Women's health cannot be limited to physical health, but must include mental, spiritual and social well-being. We must assume new strategies to ensure that women's health addresses the glaring disparities we see today."

In addition to coordinating the Governor's Conference on Women's Health and ensuring that policies and programs use a gendered approach to respond to women's health across the life **see WOMEN'S HEALTH p. 3**

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Office of Injury Prevention Initiates Drowning Prevention Awareness Campaign

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) Office of Injury Prevention joins 15 county health departments to address the tragedy of child drownings, every parent's nightmare but an almost completely preventable danger.

The "Keep Your Eyes on the Kids" initiative is aimed at increasing awareness for drowning prevention this summer. Florida is currently third in the nation for overall drowning deaths and has the highest number of drownings in the nation for the 1–4 year old age group (statistics for 1999–2003 period).

"Nothing takes the place of constant, vigilant and uninterrupted adult supervision when it comes to preventing child drownings," said Secretary of Health M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D. "One drowning is one too many and we will continue to work collaboratively with our local and national partners to prevent these tragic deaths."

Preliminary 2005 death certificate data shows that the overall number of drowning deaths in Florida has decreased from 2004. However, there was an increase in the total drowning deaths for the 1–4 age group, from 56

in 2004 to 64 in 2005. To assist in the education effort, DOH broadcast a paid public service announcement (PSA) campaign during the months of May and June. The campaign focuses on adults maintaining eye contact on children when they are in or around water. The broadcast was aired in the following counties, which have the highest number of 1–4 year old drowning deaths: Broward, Miami-Dade, Hillsborough, Orange, Palm Beach, Duval, Lee, Marion, Brevard, Polk, Seminole, Volusia, Manatee, Collier and Pinellas.

"Our goal is to have zero drowning deaths in Florida," said DOH Deputy Secretary for Health and Florida Women's Health Officer Nancy Humbert, A.R.N.P., M.S.N. "We are working with these counties to address this very preventable tragedy. The department's theme for the campaign is 'Keep your Eyes on the Kids,'

emphasizing that active adult supervision is the most effective drowning prevention strategy for the 1–4 age group."

DOH also presented a drowning prevention marketing symposium, May 15 in Tampa. Secretary François and Deputy Secretary Humbert committed DOH resources to drowning prevention efforts. They also engaged in dialogue with public and private partners, including the Denny's restaurant chain, to actively collaborate and share resources to decrease the drowning deaths and near deaths in Florida.

For more information on drowning prevention, visit the DOH Office of Injury Prevention Web site at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Workforce/InjuryPrevention/index.html> or contact your local county health department to learn of local efforts. ■



Scott Heston, (left) team leader, and team members review the items in the "Go Kits" as the Region Three Environmental Epidemiology task force drills for deployment.

Public health task force drill formulated to include real-life uncertainties

Public health strike teams in environmental health and epidemiology in Gainesville conducted training in May for a disaster deployment using a scenario that began with avian influenza and transformed into an inhalational anthrax disease.

Four leaders chose and briefed a multidisciplinary team, thus creating a first of its kind Public Health Task Force. The Disease Defense! Disaster Deployment Drill provided a model for the state and nation in training public health teams to standards as described in the National Incident Management resource management section for asset typing. The team was thrown a deliberate curve ball when they initially were led to believe that the emergency involved avian influenza, but when they arrived at the site used as a hospital, the outbreak was defined for them as inhalational anthrax. This confusion brought valuable problems and obstacles to the exercise, and brought in the hazardous materials unit for discussion with the environmental health staff about sample collection and shipments.

Using the skills gained from training, the team members were able to demonstrate their competencies. The half day drill consisted of four fast-paced evolutions in various locations around the Alachua County Health Department. Team leaders were given instructions and then expected to mobilize the teams to accomplish them.

The first evolution focused on the logistical details of deployment. After checking their equipment, individual team member functions were assigned so they knew their individual roles. Safety of the convoy and communication mechanisms was reviewed with the team.

The second evolution focused on the utilization of personal protective equipment during an interview with a patient having avian influenza. Team members used creative problem solving when they discovered they would like to wear booties and hair covering but did not have any in the kit. In addition, when it was discovered that all the "sick" persons had a common exposure from an animal skins convention, the environmental health team members worked with local haz-mat experts to develop a sampling collection and analysis plan.

The third evolution tested the team's ability to use the communications equipment. Handheld AXIM equipment, walkie talkies and a satellite phone were used. This simulated the teams going out to locate a home of an ill person or site housing skins and collecting latitudinal and longitudinal information.

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The final and fourth evolution focused on the connection with the Florida State Public Health Laboratory. In the scenario, the team leaders were asked by medical providers to assist by advising them if the correct clinical samples had been taken. Mock environmental and clinical samples were provided to the teams that were charged with getting them to the state laboratory for analysis. Phil Lee, with the Jacksonville lab, was available to consult

with each team in person and discuss sampling and analysis methodology. Several state Regional Emergency Response Advisors (RERA) were also available to discuss their role in transporting specimens and response.

Each team member took home a deployment notebook and compact disc with useful material and references. This notebook becomes part of the deployment pack or Go Kit that has been built over the last 6 months. Each county health department in the 13 county region houses multiple Go Kits for easy access and quick deployment.

Photos taken throughout each evolution show that while the teams took their tasks seriously, they were comfortable and confident with each other and in their ability to work as a team. Over lunch, an initial exercise evaluation was conducted. Thomas Belcuore, regional health and medical chairperson, congratulated the teams and spoke about the value of their work. After the teams were dismissed, the team evaluators reviewed their findings. The next task of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council was to provide by the end of June an evaluation report that is compliant with Homeland Security standards. By bringing together all the spring training, the teams were able to "connect the dots" thus providing a sense of accomplishment and readiness. While there is always more work to do, Region 3 has made measurable progress in being prepared to assist in a disaster and defend against disease. ■

Great to Wait youth rallies draw large crowds

They arrived by the hundreds on Saturday mornings—on buses, in cars, some in groups, others with just a friend or parent. Expressions changed from sleepy or bored to enthusiastic as the thumping, bumping, energizing beat of the music brought the crowd alive.

A rock concert? Hardly. These teens were attending an "It's Great to Wait" youth rally for abstinence education. With music, motivational speakers and performers, skits and the popular Abstinence Idol youth talent contest, the young audience members had fun, but most importantly, heard compelling information on why waiting to have sex until marriage is the smart, healthy choice to make.

From late March through May, in seven cities throughout the state, the Florida DOH's Abstinence Education Program presented a successful series of "It's Great to Wait" youth rallies. The events in Pensacola, Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Miami, West Palm Beach and Tallahassee were attended by a total of 4,085 teens and parents. These culturally diverse rallies averaged nearly 600 youth and adult attendees per event, with attendance ranging from just under 400 in West Palm Beach to close to 800 in Tallahassee.

"It's not at all what I expected," said Natalie, a teenager from West Palm Beach. "I thought it would be boring, but this is fun!"

Following the rally's edu-tainment format, the presenters used personal stories, song lyrics, skits and other activities to convey information to the youth about the medical risks and other consequences of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and teen pregnancies as they promoted sexual abstinence as the cool thing to do. Participants were given techniques for resisting sexual advances and how to remain strong in their decision to remain sexually abstinent in today's sexually charged culture.

Teens were not the only ones learning important lessons. The rallies also included a workshop just for parents, guardians and other adults to promote and encourage them to have more open discussion with the young people in their lives about sex, relationships and abstinence. Experienced youth counselors and speakers helped parents understand the pressures faced by today's teens, and provided techniques for parents to talk to their children.

The day prior to each rally, the Abstinence Education Program also hosted an Abstinence Educator Training Workshop for those adults, youth leaders and mentors wanting to learn how to teach abstinence until marriage in their local communities. These workshops, which drew 542 community representatives statewide, were facilitated by noted speaker Julie Laipply, who used her expertise in brain-based learning to provide educators with research-proven strategies to help them effectively reach young people with the abstinence message.

As Linda Scott with the Girl Scouts of the Suncoast, Inc. remarked, "Thank you... It was wonderful... filled with valuable information presented in a wonderful energetic format... I thoroughly enjoyed it! Please prepare many more and invite us to all of them again..."

Through initiatives such as the "Great to Wait" youth rallies the Abstinence Education Program continues influencing thousands of teens to make the healthiest choice of their lives—sexual abstinence until marriage. ■

G2W
IT'S GREATTOWAIT
www.greattowait.com

Florida research centers awarded \$8 million to fight tobacco-related disease

Florida Department of Health (DOH) Secretary M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D., in June announced the 2006 recipients of the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program grants. Seventeen grants, totaling \$8.09 million, were awarded to biomedical research scientists from Florida-based universities, small biomedical businesses and clinical research institutions. These grant-funded projects will expand the foundation of knowledge for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and cure of tobacco-related diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke and pulmonary disease.

"We are pleased to be able to provide this financial support to research scientists throughout the state," said Dr. François. "Our support to them is critical as they continue to develop methods of prevention, diagnosis and cure for illnesses that affect many Floridians. It is our deepest conviction that these projects will better the lives of individuals and families across Florida."

The James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program's mission is to improve and expand biomedical knowledge in Florida by encouraging research related to the health effects of tobacco use. Program funding comes from the interest earned on a \$150 million reserve within the Lawton Chiles Endowment Fund, a fund established with monies received from the tobacco industry through Florida's tobacco lawsuit settlement agreement. The program also receives an annual appropriation from the Florida Legislature.

Grant recipients are competitively selected by a process overseen by the DOH Biomedical Research Advisory Council (BRAC). BRAC, a nine-member advisory council, uses a multi-step process to peer review and rank all projects. Peer reviews are conducted by experts outside the state of Florida. All funded research projects are monitored throughout the life of the grant by program staff in the DOH Office of Public Health Research and the Lytmos Group, a grant management contractor. The grants are awarded in three main categories:

- **New Investigator Research (NIR) grants fund research by scientists embarking upon independent research careers in Florida;**
- **Small Business Technology Transfer (SBTT) grants are designed to stimulate the commercialization of biomedical research in Florida. These grants fund joint projects between investigators at research institutions and small business enterprises in order to facilitate the translation of biomedical research into commercially viable drugs and products;**
- **Team Science Program (TSP) grants are awarded to multidisciplinary, multi-investigator and multi-project programs at larger research institutions in order to assist them in building a research infrastructure at each institution. These grants require a matching fund commitment from the institution.**

For more information visit the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program web site at <http://www.floridabiomed.com> ■



Quest for Quality

Evaluation is an essential part of all we do

Whether we're conscious of it or not, we look and listen for evaluation information every day. Evaluation guides us so that we know if our efforts make a difference. Evaluation helps determine whether a program's objectives or goals are being achieved.

Data, either through statistics or verbal feedback, provide the evaluation information to drive decisions. At the Department of Health, evaluation data is essential at every level: for assessing individual performance, determining a program's impact or measuring activity outcomes that affect a health condition.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's operating principles for public health maintain that evaluation is the very foundation of all we do. Consider these applications:

- **Use science as a basis for decision-making and action**
- **Expand the quest for equity in healthcare**
- **Perform effectively as a service agency**
- **Make efforts outcome-oriented, and**
- **Be accountable.**

These principles provide guidance for improving how public health activities are planned and managed. They underscore the need for programs to develop clear plans, form partnerships for community improvement and create feedback systems that allow learning and ongoing improvement to occur.

For more information, contact the Office of Performance Improvement at (850) 245-4007, SunCom 205-4007 or visit the Office of Performance Improvement's intranet site. ■

Save the Date!



November 30–December 1, 2006
Rosen Plaza, Orlando

Focusing on best practice models, the latest in leadership strategies and quality information you can use.

Online registration begins September 5th.

Brought to you by the Office of Performance Improvement.
For more information, contact Bonnie Gaughan-Bailey at
(850) 245-4007 or SunCom 205-4007.

WOMEN'S HEALTH from cover

span, Deputy Secretary Humbert is responsible for developing a statewide women's health plan. This plan should aim to reduce premature deaths and health disparities among Florida's women through a lifespan approach that addresses not only a woman's physical health status, but also her social well-being. This facet of overall health involves factors such as childcare support, domestic violence and other family environment issues and economic status. The plan will integrate women's health activities into existing programs and services where possible.

Deputy Secretary Humbert has organized an interagency committee on women's health that includes representatives from the departments of Children and Families, Corrections, Education, Elder Affairs, Environmental Protection, Financial Services, Health, Juvenile Justice and the Agency for Health Care Administration, among others. This committee assists the Women's Health Officer to carry out activities outlined in the legislation, including planning the Governor's Conference on Women's Health and developing the statewide women's health plan.

For more information, please visit the Florida DOH Women's Health Initiative web site at: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/wh/index.html>. ■

Sterling Storyboard competition

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM UNDER NANCY HUMBERT, DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR HEALTH, COMPETED IN THE STERLING STORYBOARD COMPETITION AT THE STERLING CONFERENCE IN JUNE. The topic was a multi-program self-assessment of management practices.

During the summer of 2005, approximately 40 leaders from the Deputy Secretary for Health programs conducted a self-assessment of management practices against the Sterling Challenge Criteria, and developed a prioritized list of actions. They validated the self-assessment from the employees' perspective through the Baldrige "Are We Making Progress?" survey. Employee comments validated the leadership's identified priorities for improvement. Post-survey, the Leadership Team prioritized identified opportunities for improvement, brainstormed solutions, and developed an action plan. Progress on the action plan is monitored at monthly Leadership Team meetings, and activities and progress are communicated to all employees.

Countermeasures in each Sterling category have been implemented, including leadership training, systematic strategic planning, implementation of customer listening and learning methods, development of Balanced Scorecards, and training/deployment of process management.

Although the journey is far from over, the Leadership Team has learned that the key to achievement is to simplify and focus on the critical few, not the insignificant many. ■

Orange County opens new satellite Office of Vital Statistics in Winter Garden

IN AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY, THE ORANGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF VITAL STATISTICS HAS OPENED A SATELLITE OFFICE AT THE HEALTH ALLIANCE FAMILY CARE CENTER IN WINTER GARDEN. They were welcomed to the community by West Orange Chamber of Commerce ambassadors. From opening day, there has been a steady flow of customers seeking birth certificate information.

Due to travel, health insurance and school requirements, there is a constant need for official birth certificates with the State of Florida seal. This office makes this service accessible for the customers.

At this new location, the Orange County Health Department-Office of Vital Statistics is open on Fridays and only provides State of Florida certified, computer-generated birth certificates to the public. ■

People in Public Health

Orange CHD director named president-elect of American Association of Public Health Physicians

Orange County Health Department (OCHD) is pleased to announce that OCHD Director Kevin M. Sherin M.D., MPH, has been unanimously elected as president-elect of the American Association of Public Health Physicians (AAPHP). During its June membership meeting, held in Chicago, Dr. Sherin was elected to serve as president for the term of 2008–2010.

The AAPHP is a specialty society within the American Medical Association that focuses solely on physicians working in public health. It represents federal, state and local public health physicians as well as physicians from other specialties that have a significant stake in public health issues. Many county public health physicians in Florida are members of AAPHP.

The AAPHP often takes strong stances on public health issues at a national level and within the AMA, such as the tobacco settlement issues in the late 1990s and current preparedness issues. AAPHP and its members also help organize physician response in national disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

For more information about the American Association of Public Health Physicians, visit www.aapHP.org.

Performance Improvement staffers chosen to present at APHA annual meeting

Cathy Brewton, performance management consultant, and Dennis Cookro, M.D., medical consultant, both in DOH's Office of Performance Improvement, have been selected to deliver an oral presentation at the 134th annual meeting and exposition of the American Public Health Association (APHA), held in Boston this November. Their abstract, Quality Improvement in Public Health: Opportunities and Challenges, is based on a pilot process in performance improvement conducted for the past year with 21 county health departments throughout Florida.

The APHA Annual Meeting is the premier platform to share successes and failures, discover exceptional best practices and learn from expert colleagues and the latest research in the field. More than 13,000 public health professionals are expected to attend this year's annual meeting, which will include scientific sessions, networking opportunities and the largest public health exposition in the nation.

DOH wins 2006 Image Awards for outstanding public relations projects

The Capital Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA) presented two awards honoring DOH public relations efforts at its annual Image Awards ceremony in April. The Image Awards competition is conducted annually by FPRA to recognize outstanding public relations programs in the Capital City region and to encourage and promote the development of public relations professionalism in our region.

To qualify for Image Award judging, an entry must incorporate sound public relations research and planning and must meet the highest standard of execution, evaluation of results and budget. DOH winning events/practitioners were: Florida Pandemic Flu Summit, award of distinction in the special events category; and Step Up, Florida! which won the judges' award and award of distinction in the student projects/public relations campaign. Michelle Dahnke was the individual winner in this category.

Lisa Conti elected head of new state environmental health directors group

DOH announced in June that state Environmental Health Director Lisa Conti, D.V.M., M.P.H., Dipl. ACVPM, CEHP, was unanimously selected as chair of the newly-formed association of State Environmental Health Directors (SEHD), a group supported by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers (ASTHO).

"It is truly an honor for me and the Florida Department of Health to have an opportunity to serve in this role," said Dr. Conti.

State environmental health directors were appointed by their state health officer to this new group. Environmental health is the study of how environmental factors can harm or promote human health. SEHD was formed to focus on the myriad of environmental health issues from air quality to zoonoses control. The group is poised to be the national voice to address issues such as the health impact of how we design and build our communities as well as fundamental public health activities like assuring safe drinking water.

"I am proud of the work Dr. Conti has accomplished as Florida's director of environmental health and this recognition did not come as a surprise," said Deputy State Health Officer Bonita Sorensen, M.D., M.B.A. "I am confident she will be an outstanding inaugural leader of the SEHD."

For more information about DOH environmental health programs, please visit the DOH Web site at www.doh.state.fl.us. For more information on the State Environmental Health Directors, visit <http://www.astho.org/?template=environment.html>.

Collins wins design awards

Congratulations to Josephus Collins, a graphic designer in the Office of Performance Improvement. Collins won the Best in Category award for brochures, in the annual Florida Print Association competition. The winning brochure design was We Make the Change, a four-color project for the DOH Office of HIV/AIDS.

In addition, Collins won second place and special appreciation in the association's overall award category. His prize winning design was for a four-color ad for Hollister Clothing, a project Collins did for his graphic design studies at Florida A&M University. Collins is a senior planning to graduate next summer, and works full time in the Office of Performance Improvement.

New health director for Duval County Health Department

Robert G. Harmon, M.D., M.P.H. was selected in May to serve as the director of the Duval County Health Department. "Dr. Harmon is an executive physician with extensive leadership experience in managed care, academia and governmental health," said Deputy State Health Officer Bonita Sorensen, M.D., M.B.A.

His career background includes years of service as director at the Missouri Department of Health and Maricopa County Department of Health Services, where he directed 750 employees and oversaw an annual budget of \$30 million. In addition, Dr. Harmon is the president of The Harmon Health Group (HHG) in Eden Prairie, Minn. HHG provides health consulting specializing in managed care, preventive medicine, public health, quality improvement and strategic planning projects for governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations and employers.

Harmon was the national director of Optum/United Health Group in Reston, Va., and directed a \$1 million budget. He managed programs such as a 24-hour nurse telephone triage and health information service, employee assistance, maternity management and health promotion services.

Harmon received a bachelor of arts in zoology in 1966 and an M.D. in 1970 from Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. After completing residency at the University of Colorado Medical Center and Johns Hopkins University in 1977, Harmon completed an additional degree in public health (M.P.H.) at Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Sorensen added, "We are so delighted to have such a health advocate join DOH's team. With Dr. Harmon's past decade of managed care, I believe he will truly exemplify the six values of service to the Department's customers: excellence, commitment to service, empowerment, integrity, respect and teamwork."

the advisor

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Rick García named Board of Nursing executive director

The Florida Board of Nursing has a new executive director in the person of Enrique (Rick) Carlos García, M.S., R.N., C.C.M. García's duties will include the planning, organizing and coordinating of work related to the licensure of nurses, regulation of nursing practice and other functions of the Florida Board of Nursing. He was selected by Secretary M. Rony François.

The Florida Board of Nursing has a new executive director in the person of Enrique (Rick) Carlos García, M.S., R.N., C.C.M. García's duties will include the planning, organizing and coordinating of work related to the licensure of nurses, regulation of nursing practice and other functions of the Florida Board of Nursing. He was selected by Secretary M. Rony François.

"Mr. Garcia brings more than 14 years of nursing experience to the Department of Health," said Dr. François. "His extensive knowledge of nursing—as a practitioner, a professor, and a board member—will be a tremendous asset to the Board of Nursing, the department, and the people of our state. I am confident Mr. García's abilities will elevate the Board of Nursing to new heights."

García most recently served in faculty positions at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, as well as manager of clinical operations at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He was also a member of the Washington, D.C., Board of Nursing, serving as chair of the education committee.

García's experience includes working as a nurse specialist focusing on pediatrics and adolescents at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland and a PRN nurse at Inova Alexandria Hospital in Virginia. He has also been on the staff of several institutions in south Florida, including Health South Doctor's Hospital, Jackson Memorial Medical Center, Deering Hospital and the University of Miami's School of Medicine in the Department of Pediatrics.

García earned a bachelor of science in nursing from the University of Miami in 1995. García earned his master's of science in integrated health systems management in 2000 from Georgetown University.

The Florida Board of Nursing consists of 13 members—seven registered nurses (including at least one advanced registered nurse practitioner, one nurse executive, and one nurse educator member of an approved program), three licensed practical nurses, and three consumer members who have never practiced nursing. All board members must be Florida residents and one must be at least 60 years old. The members are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Florida Senate.

The Florida Board of Nursing protects the health and safety of Florida's residents and visitors by establishing requirements for licensure and through diligent discipline of practitioners who violate practice acts defined by Chapters 120, 456 and 464 of the Florida Statutes and rule 64B-9 of the Florida Administrative Code. The legislative intent of the practice act is to ensure that every nurse practicing in Florida meets minimum requirements for safe practice. The Board's responsibility is to ensure that nurses 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 nurses to ensure their knowledge and skills remain current. For more information about the Florida Board of Nursing, visit www.doh.state.fl.us/mqa/nursing/. ■