

the health advisor

DOH Mission:

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

May/June 2003

Florida enters third summer with West Nile Virus

Florida first experienced West Nile Virus (WNV) during the summer of 2001. On the otherwise celebrated day of July 4, the fateful phone call from the state's lead arborvirologist alerted others of the discovery.

Dr. Lillian Stark reported that a crow sent from the Jefferson County Health Department was found with the mosquito-borne WNV. At the time, DOH laboratories were already testing birds, horses, chickens and other animals from across the state for potential threatening viruses, West Nile among them.

The interagency pre-planning for such a moment had paid off. DOH partners were quickly notified and the state's response for public education, increased surveillance, and integrated pest management began immediately. Environmental Health staff at county health departments went into high gear fielding questions about dead birds and drove to remote locations, in some cases, to pick up reported dead birds. Public and private veterinary practitioners pooled resources to identify and report horses with the disease, and starting in August of 2001, these veterinarians valiantly began immunization efforts with the new WNV vaccine made specifically for horses. As well, public and private health care workers were provided tools to help identify and diagnose human WNV cases.

The state's animal surveillance data was—and remains—instrumental in providing early warning for human risk in most counties. The state's surveillance system has identified WNV in many species of dead birds (mostly crows and jays, but also hummingbirds and eagles); sentinel chickens whose blood is tested for antibodies against mosquito-borne viruses; and live wild birds, mosquitoes and horses throughout the state.

In 2002, WNV for the first time was documented in squirrels and farm-reared alligators in Florida. (Yes, mosquitoes do bite alligators, and yes, it's OK to eat alligator meat as long as it's cooked.)

The great success story for Florida, and the foundation of the Florida arbovirus (mosquito-transmitted virus) prevention system, is the interagency planning and cooperation we have enjoyed with local, state and federal partners. Since 2000, the Interagency Arbovirus Control Task Force meets to update the State Surveillance and Response Plan and continues to have weekly conference calls throughout the year to discuss strategy for dealing with mosquito-borne diseases.

(mother-to-fetus) transmission. In addition, two cases of WNV infection of laboratory workers from occupational exposure were reported in the U.S. last year. It is important to note that these methods of transmission represent a very small proportion of cases.

The principle route of human infection with WNV is through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. The virus can find its way into the mosquito's salivary glands where it can get injected during subsequent blood meals.

For the remainder of 2001 following the initial summertime phone call that alerted officials about WNV in Florida, 12 human

Florida residents are encouraged to report dead birds via the website www.wildflorida.org/bird.

cases were confirmed in the state. In 2002, there were 28 confirmed human WNV cases and the health secretary placed 39 counties under medical alert status. Symptoms include headache, fever, fatigue, dizziness, weakness and confusion. Most infected people have no reaction at all or only mild symptoms.

While it's too early to predict the natural history of West Nile Virus in the State of Florida, we've been fortunate to have relatively few human cases of severe disease (meningoencephalitis) or mild disease (West Nile fever). In part, the public awareness campaign alerting residents and visitors about personal protection measures against mosquitoes is greatly responsible for the public health success. The awareness campaign includes websites and press releases to educate the public how to "avoid" mosquito bites, as well as information about locations where mosquito-borne viruses are reported.

As we approach the hot and humid months when mosquitoes are most prevalent in some areas of Florida, Monroe County Health Department Director Dr. Jake Rutherford sums up the state's awareness and prevention message with what he's coined the "5 D's." See the 5 D's to the left of this page.

For more information about West Nile and other arboviruses, visit the DOH website at www9.myflorida.com/Disease_ctrl/epi/htopic/arbo/index.htm or call the Bureau of Epidemiology's Disease Outbreak Information Hotline at 1-888-880-5782 for recorded information, or call your local county health department.

LISA CONTI, D.V.M., M.P.H., DIVISION DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Dusk & Dawn don't go outside at dusk or dawn when mosquitoes are looking for your blood

Dress your clothes should cover your skin

DEET use mosquito repellents with DEET or pyrethrins

Drain get rid of standing water where mosquitoes lay eggs

DOH laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne (arboviral) disease.



We haven't lost sight that Florida has a long history of arboviruses, from yellow fever and dengue viruses (which are no longer endemic to the state) to eastern equine encephalitis and St. Louis encephalitis viruses (which are endemic and for which, along with WNV, DOH is carefully monitoring).

Last year brought to the forefront new extremes of mosquito-borne viruses and WNV, in particular. The country documented novel transmissions of WNV during its rapid spread to the West Coast. These included the four cases from infected transplanted organs—two of which were in Florida; several cases through blood-product transfusions—one in Florida; one case of breast-milk transmission to an infant; and one reported case of transplacental



may is national hepatitis awareness month

HEPATITIS IS CHARACTERIZED BY INFLAMMATION OF THE LIVER. Hepatitis A, B, and C are the most common types of viral hepatitis in the United States. Symptoms of hepatitis include nausea, fever, weakness, loss of appetite, stomach pain, jaundice, and dark, tea-colored urine. Viral hepatitis causes significant morbidity and mortality in Florida. While hepatitis A causes only acute disease (resolving within six months), hepatitis B and hepatitis C can cause both acute and chronic (long-lasting) disease.

Hepatitis A is transmitted by the fecal-oral route. You can get the virus by having close, personal contact with an infected person, or from contaminated food or water. Good hygiene is very important—everyone should always wash their hands completely after using the bathroom or changing a diaper, and before preparing or eating food. There were 914 cases of hepatitis A reported in Florida in 2002.

Hepatitis B is spread by having contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person. Risk factors include sharing injection drug equipment or having unprotected sex—especially with multiple partners. There were 479 cases of acute hepatitis B and 1,026 cases of chronic hepatitis B reported in Florida in 2002.

It is estimated that almost 4 million Americans and more than 270,000 Floridians are infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Hepatitis C is referred to as the “silent epidemic” because most people have no symptoms. In addition, the disease often lies undetected for 20–30 years, so most people do not know about their infection. Hepatitis C is a leading cause of cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer.

In addition to understanding how each virus is transmitted, it is important to know how to keep yourself as healthy as possible. All people infected with HCV should be vaccinated for hepatitis A (HAV) and hepatitis B (HBV), because both of these viruses can cause further liver damage for someone with HCV or other chronic diseases.

Florida's Hepatitis Program is located in the Bureau of HIV/AIDS at the Florida Department of Health. The Hepatitis Program has a variety of resources and services available on the Internet and Intranet sites for health care workers and the public. The hepatitis home page can be found by viewing www.myflorida.com, then typing “hepatitis” in the search area. Hepatitis information, support group contacts, vaccine and testing information, clinical trial availability, and other hepatitis materials are available at the site. The Hepatitis Program has produced a variety of educational materials that can be distributed to patients or used as teaching tools. Some of these include flyers, brochures, posters and CD-ROMs.

For more information about Florida's Hepatitis and Liver Failure Prevention and Control Program, or to request educational materials, please call the program at 850-245-4334.

APRIL CROWLEY, FLORIDA HEPATITIS & LIVER FAILURE PREVENTION & CONTROL PROGRAM

quality management showcase 2003 slated for september 17, 18

The third annual Quality Management Showcase is scheduled for September 17 and 18, 2003, at the DoubleTree Westshore Hotel in Tampa. This year's theme “Picture Our Tomorrow with Focus on Quality Today” will promote cutting edge best practice models and tools essential for continuous quality improvement.

The conference will feature keynote speakers in the areas of quality practices, highlighting model programs for replication, and creating a forum for exchange of ideas. The planning committee is in the planning and preparation phases securing speakers to provide real-time examples that apply to public health practices. The Showcase also will highlight DOH accomplishments and provide a venue to celebrate a job well done!

For more information, contact Bonnie Gaughan-Bailey or Jeanne Lane at (850) 245-4007 or SunCom 205-4007.

hillsborough CHD captures attention at local events

THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (CHD) HAS SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE AND PROMOTE SERVICES through several venues this year and recently has formed a Marketing Activities Workgroup to develop an annual plan to further enhance community outreach efforts.

In January, the CHD partnered with Channel 8, the local NBC affiliate station, during the Health and Fitness Expo at the Tampa Convention Center. In February, it showcased services at the Florida State Fair.

The Health and Fitness Expo was in conjunction with the Bank of America Gasparilla Distance Classic and the Hops Marathon Tampa Bay Race Day, which together brought an estimated 35,000 people to the Convention Center. The CHD exhibit featured the Mobile Unit and many services, including Immunizations, KidCare, HIV pre-test counseling and testing, Environmental Health, Human Resources, Epidemiology and WIC. A brochure was developed to include information about all services. A visual presentation of services also was available on a TV monitor.

To capture attention at the Expo, CHD employees performed skits on stage about the Tobacco Awareness Program, KidCare, WIC and personnel recruitment. Exhibit visitors received health promotion items such as refrigerator magnets from

The Florida Hepatitis Program encourages all adults who are at increased risk for infection, or the serious consequences of infection, to get tested and know their hepatitis status. Hepatitis C usually is spread through contact with blood containing the virus.

YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO HEPATITIS C BY:

- Receiving a transfusion of blood or blood products before 1992
- Sharing needles to inject drugs (even once, many years ago)
- Receiving a tattoo or having a body part pierced with an unsterilized needle
- Sharing a straw to snort drugs. Small amounts of blood on the straw may spread the virus
- Accidental sticks with used needles or other accidental exposure to blood
- Sharing razors, nail clippers, scissors, or toothbrushes
- Being born to a mother with the hepatitis C virus (HCV)

Health Promotion and Education; lead test kits from Environmental Health; coloring books from WIC and Nutrition; and rulers, crayons, pens and pencils from KidCare. In all, about 15,000 health promotion items and information brochures were distributed to the public. It also gave health officials an opportunity to provide 45 anonymous HIV tests, 235 flu shots, 109 pneumonia shots, and 235 tetanus shots.

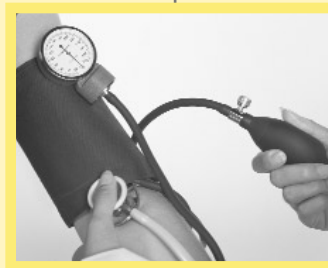
In conjunction with the Expo, Channel 8 provided a public service commercial that included an interview with CHD Director Dr. Douglas Holt.

At the Florida State Fair in February, Hillsborough CHD participated with the local radio station 107.3 The Bay to provide more than 18,000 health promotion items

and information brochures to fairgoers.

Other efforts to promote CHD services include “wrapping” maintenance vans with information that supports the mission of health and safety. Various programs combined funds to purchase the “wraps” for vans that are visible throughout the county on a daily basis. Hillsborough's Mobile Unit and one of the vans promote the CHD as a great place to work in the effort to help recruit hard-to-fill positions, such as nursing ones.

MARKETING ACTIVITIES WORKGROUP, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



June 27, 2003, is national HIV testing day

DOH'S BUREAU OF HIV/AIDS IS ONCE AGAIN WORKING WITH EARLY INTERVENTION CONSULTANTS throughout the state on preparations for National HIV Testing Day, this year on Friday, June 27.

The goal of the event is to promote people's awareness of the need to “take the test” and then “take control” by returning for test results to learn their HIV status.

The National HIV Testing Day Campaign was initiated in 1995 by the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) to provide a focal point for promoting voluntary counseling and testing nationally. The campaign was created to send a message from those living with HIV/AIDS that there are strong reasons for people at risk for HIV infection to learn their serostatus and take charge of their health.

NAPWA created the campaign to address the escalating rate of new infections of HIV in the United States among many populations, and to overcome the widespread fear and ambivalence among those various groups to learn their HIV status.

In Florida, the goal this year is to have our 67 county health departments offer free HIV testing extended hours, and incorporate creative outreach events. Activities may be targeted to priority populations identified in local prevention plans, and events coordinated with local community planning partnerships and community-based organizations.

Because co-infection of HIV and hepatitis is so prevalent, many county health departments also will provide vaccinations for hepatitis A and B, and/or testing for hepatitis B and hepatitis C. It is estimated that 20 to 30 percent of HIV positive clients are also infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Hepatitis B and HCV share several risk factors with HIV—contact with blood or body fluids of an infected person; and the rate of HIV-HCV co-infection is highest among those who acquired HIV through sharing needles for drug use.

During National HIV Testing Day last year, state records show 4,325 tests were completed and 93 of those were positive. Of those tested 2,191 returned for their results—50.1 percent of the negatives and 78.5 percent of the positives.

RICK DULIN, BUREAU OF HIV/AIDS

a reminder to protect the skin you're in!

skin & sun facts, protection reminders & suggestions

MAY IS SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH and we'd like to take the opportunity to remind you of the year-round need for skin protection from harmful UV rays, and we'd also like to say "isn't skin great!"

The skin you're in is the largest organ of your body and it renews itself over our entire lifetimes—all 19,000,000 skin cells per square inch.

You can appreciate the nerve cells in your skin that make you sensitive to touch, pressure and temperature. Skin is tough, elastic, flexible and waterproof and it has always seemed to do a good job keeping other organs from spilling out.

Skin's biggest job is protection. Reciprocation is enough said.



- ☞ Some sunlight is good for the skin because it helps in the production of vitamin D, which activates the calcium in our bodies.
- ☞ 70 percent of household dust is made up of dead skin cells. (It's the renewal thing.)
- ☞ Skin cancer is one of the most preventable cancers and the most common form of cancer.
- ☞ Everyone is at risk for skin cancer, regardless of race or ethnicity.
- ☞ 80 percent of sun damage occurs before the age of 20, but takes some 40 years to show up.
- ☞ 80 percent of skin cancers are located on the head and neck.
- ☞ The average age to discover skin cancer is 50.
- ☞ Dangerous sunburns can happen even on cloudy days.
- ☞ Ultraviolet rays can cause cataracts. Wear sunglasses that block UV rays.
- ☞ UV rays contribute to skin wrinkles. Exposure to the sun breaks down and weakens the middle layer of skin, the dermis.
- ☞ UVA/UVB Ultraviolet radiation is part of the sun's spectrum—wavelengths shorter than visible light. UVB rays are more intense in summer months. UVA rays are more constant year-round and penetrate deeper into the skin's layers. Both UVA and UVB rays contribute to burning, premature aging of the skin and skin cancer.
- ☞ SUNSCREEN Water resistant sunscreen indicates that a product maintains a degree of sunburn protection after 40 minutes of water exposure. Waterproof indicates that a product maintains its degree of sunburn protection after 80 minutes of water exposure.
- ☞ SUN SAVVY ADVICE Use sunscreen all year with at least SPF 15 and UVA/UVB protection. Protect your children with sunscreen. Avoid sun lamps and tanning salons. Don some cool shades to protect your eyes and a hat to protect your face, scalp, ears and neck. Wear clothing that protects your arms and legs when outside—especially between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. when rays are strongest. Seek shade under a tree, umbrella or shelter.
- ☞ KNOW YOUR SKIN Perform monthly self-checks of your skins. Schedule an exam with your physician to check out skin changes.

MQA provides online services for health care practitioners

Are you a health care practitioner who needs written license certification to obtain licensure in another state?

Health care boards from other states usually require written license certification before considering an application. Also, insurance companies and prospective employers may require written certification of licensure in Florida. This certification is a specially generated DOH document that includes the licensure status and disciplinary history of an individual or facility licensed by the Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA). MQA also generates certificates of non-licensure, which is a DOH document that states there is no record of licensure for an individual or facility with the name and/or spelling provided, in the profession requested.

MQA makes it easy to place a request for certification online using the MQA services website, which accepts most major credit cards.

The online services website offers other convenient services such as online address changes, online

to access
MQA's
online services:

1. Go to www.doh-mqaservices.com
2. Select "License Certification" listed under Public Services
3. Select "Online and Pay by credit card"
4. Select "Complete the form"

renewals and ability to update profile information.

When sending credit card information electronically, your privacy is our first concern. MQA uses industry standard practices to safeguard the confidentiality of your personal identifiable information, including "firewalls" and Secure Socket Layers. MQA treats data as an asset that must be protected against loss and unauthorized access. The online services website is a secure site and does not retain complete credit card information after processing.

MQA COMMUNICATIONS

DOH provides SARS internet site

DOH CREATED A WEBSITE WITH INFORMATION ABOUT SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS) available at www.sars@doh.state.fl.us. The site includes the latest information available on this new illness, guidance for health departments and laboratories, advice for travelers, frequently asked questions and appropriate links.

DOH is working with the CDC to identify potential SARS cases in citizens and visitors to Florida. The Department also asked local health officials and clinicians to watch for patients who became sick after February 1, 2003, and have symptoms of this respiratory illness.

Symptoms usually begin with a fever (measured temperature greater than 100.4°F [$>38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$]). The fever is sometimes associated with chills or other symptoms, including headache, general feeling of discomfort, and body aches. Some people also experience mild respiratory symptoms at the outset. After 2 to 7 days, SARS patients may develop a dry, nonproductive cough that might be accompanied by or progress to the point where insufficient oxygen is getting to the blood. In 10 to 20 percent of cases, patients will require mechanical ventilation.

collier CHD garners national award for generation excellence

GENERATION EXCELLENCE, THE 5-YEAR COMMUNITY INTERVENTION PROGRAM AT COLLIER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (CHD) that was completed last year, was a finalist in the 11th Annual Premier Cares Award for offering screening and education services to the culturally diverse farm worker community of Immokalee.

The Premier Cares Award, sponsored by Premier and its member hospitals, recognizes exemplary efforts by not-for-profit organizations to improve the health of the medically underserved. Representatives from the Generation Excellence program received recognition and a \$20,000 award during Premier's annual Governance Education Conference at Naples in January. The cash award will be used to continue to enhance health care for the community of Immokalee.

Premier, a leading alliance of not-for-profit hospitals, receives more than 200 applications annually for the prestigious award. A panel of health care staff and industry leaders selects a top winner and five finalists. Project Access, a community-based health services program in North Carolina, was selected this year to receive the top award.

Generation Excellence was designed to reduce the incidence of chronic disease such as type 2 diabetes and hypertension in the local, culturally diverse population while increasing physical activity among children. Throughout the program, Lake Trafford Elementary team has improved cardiac outcomes through increased exercise. Generation Excellence also held 194 screening events over the last two years at various sites in Immokalee such as Farm Worker Village, Roberts Center, and Guadalupe Social Services, providing more than 2,592 screening services for diabetes and 2,685 services for hypertension with structured follow-up services.

Generation Excellence gained national attention last year when selected for the 2002 Confronting Health Disparities Award by the Washington, D.C., based National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

While the initial program has ended, it has been redesigned and is now called The Next Generation and is part of the Community Cardiovascular Health Program.

DEB MILLSAP, COLLIER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Collier CHD celebrates excellence. From left: Koko DeLisi, Health Educator Consultant; Nancy Frees, Immokalee Division Director; Chuck Lauer, Premier Cares Award judge; Dr. Joan Colfer, CHD Director; and Elia Garza, Senior Clerk Coordinator.

people in public health

dr. wiersma to serve in geneva as CDC medical officer

Steve Wiersma, M.D., M.P.H., has been selected to serve as a Medical Officer for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Geneva, Switzerland.

"In my opinion, Steve Wiersma is one of the finest epidemiologists in the country today," said Health Secretary Agwunobi. "We are extremely proud to see one of our DOH teammates elevated to a position with the potential for significant national and global public health impact. I have no doubt he will serve the CDC and World Health Organization with the same passion and dedication that he served the people of Florida during his tenure as the Florida Department of Health State Epidemiologist."

Wiersma received accolades for his leadership during the state's investigation of anthrax in Palm Beach County. He also has played major roles in Project Merlin, a computer-based statewide disease surveillance system; the Florida Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS), a training program that provides epidemiologists to county health departments; a new surveillance system for Hepatitis C; and a surveillance system for West Nile virus.

In his role at the CDC, Wiersma will focus on expanding access to vaccines for hepatitis B and other diseases in poor countries throughout the world.

Landis Crockett, M.D., M.P.H., who has served for the past eight years as the division director for disease control, will be serving as the Acting State Epidemiologist while the department conducts a national search for Wiersma's replacement.

ford appointed to CMS deputy secretary/deputy state health officer role

Sandra Elizabeth Ford, M.D., M.B.A., recently was appointed as Deputy Secretary/Deputy State Health Officer for Children's Medical Services (CMS). Ford will be responsible for directing Florida's CMS program—the nation's most comprehensive service network for children with special health needs.

Ford brings to the department extensive training and experience in pediatrics. She has the capacity for, and great interest in, working with professionals from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds; she also brings a sensitivity and enthusiasm for diverse populations and community involvement. She also is also fluent in Spanish, Italian and French.

She comes to DOH from Howard University Hospital in Washington, D.C., where she served as an attending physician at the Pediatric Outpatient Department and the Pediatric Emergency Care Area. She also was assistant professor in the university's Department of Pediatrics and Child Health.

Prior to her employment at Howard University, Ford was a medical consultant at the Potomac Job Corps Center and the Riverside Psychiatric Facility in Washington, D.C.; she served as an attending physician in Pediatric Emergency Care at the D.C. General Hospital, and as the assistant medical director at the Northeast Community Clinic in Los Angeles.

tynan appointed director of division of emergency medical operations

William P. Tynan, M.D., M.P.H., has been appointed to serve as director of the Division of Emergency Medical Operations and will oversee the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, the Office of Public Health Preparedness, and the Office of Emergency Operation.

Most recently, Tynan served as the Deputy State Epidemiologist in our Bureau of Epidemiology and has considerable experience in public health. His medical and military background make him uniquely qualified for the role.

Tynan's medical training has included advanced trauma life support, advanced cardiac life support, the Army's Combat Casualty Care, Emergency Management of Radiological Casualties, and Medical Effects of Nuclear Weapons Courses. While on active duty in the Army, he also trained and worked as a Flight Surgeon.

He completed his residency in public health at Madigan Army Medical Center and the University of Washington. Prior to joining DOH, he served as the Preventive Medicine Officer at the U.S. Central Command in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War, and later as the Chief of Preventive Medicine at Ft. Bragg, NC.

Most recently, Tynan coordinated Operation Vaccinate Florida and was responsible for planning the state's smallpox vaccination program.

"In my opinion, Steve Wiersma is one of the finest epidemiologists in the country today. We are extremely proud to see one of our DOH teammates elevated to a position with the potential for significant national and global public health impact."

HEALTH SECRETARY AGWUNOBI

dollar appointed director of administration

Rosey Dollar has been appointed as DOH Director of Administration. In her new role, she will oversee the bureaus of Budget Services, Finance and Accounting, General Services, and Human Resource Management.

Dollar is a graduate of the Florida State University with a degree in Finance. She most recently served as DOH Chief of Budget Services, and brings many years of public service leadership and expertise to the position.

conti leads division of environmental health

Lisa Conti, D.V.M., M.P.H., has been appointed Director of the Division of Environmental Health. Conti's tenure in public health spans more than 13 years, including the last five as the state's public health veterinarian.

As state public health veterinarian, she planned, initiated, and conducted epidemiological research on diseases transmitted from animals to humans, such as rabies. She also was instrumental in the development of the state's surveillance and reporting system for West Nile Virus (WNV) and other mosquito-borne diseases, and she has worked closely with other state and federal agencies on this and other such diseases.

Conti received her degree in Veterinary Medicine from the University of Florida, and a Master's in Public Health from the University of South Florida.

the advisor

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taylor appointed to information technology post

David W. Taylor has been appointed DOH Chief Information Officer/Director of Information Technology. Taylor has first-hand knowledge of the department's strategic information technology picture.

Over the past year, he has been a leader in the development of the department's information technology governance process. He previously served as the Data Center Director at the Volusia County Health Department. Through his leadership, he and his staff there developed an automated financial information system that provides both dashboard and detailed management tools for the state's 67 county health departments. He also served as the Data Processing Manager at the Volusia CHD, as well as the Telecommunications Administrator, and the District Management Systems Director with the former Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services.

Taylor holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, with a minor in Biochemistry from the University of Lowell in Lowell, MA. He also holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Central Florida.

eaton to serve as assistant chief public health nurse

Karen Eaton, R.N., M.B.A., has been appointed to serve as Assistant Chief Public Health Nurse. She will provide the leadership for key public health nursing initiatives, programs and services including direction in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of public health nursing. Most recently, Eaton served as Chief for the Bureau of Operations of DOH's Division of Medical Quality Assurance.

williams appointed to DHAT post

Phil Williams, M.S., has been appointed Director of the Division of Health Access and Tobacco (DHAT). Williams most recently served as the Director of the Division of Emergency Medical Services and Community Health Resources (EMSCHR). His wealth of experience in dealing with evolving public health issues has been instrumental during his tenure as Director of EMSCHR and will continue to be utilized in his new role.

Williams, who holds a Master of Science in Sociology from Florida State University, has more than 20 years of experience in the area of health care management and analysis, dating back to his role as a Human Services Program Manager for the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in 1981. His professional experience also includes time as a Medicaid Program Analyst, as well as a variety of human services analyst positions with the Florida Senate and as staff director for health issues with the Florida House of Representatives.

As division director, Williams will oversee the Florida Tobacco Program, Brain and Spinal Cord Program, Rural Health, and Community Health Centers. The major goals of the division are to improve access to care for Floridians, and reduce tobacco use in our communities by promoting DOH's strategic objectives relative to tobacco use in Florida.

kirkland appointed finance and accounting chief

Matt Kirkland has been appointed as DOH's Chief of Finance and accounting. Kirkland is a graduate of Florida State University with a degree in Accounting and Finance and Management Information Systems, and is a Certified Public Accountant. He most recently served as Staff Director for the Office of Revenue Control in the Department of Children and Families and previously worked for the department in Disbursements overseeing the contract and tobacco pilot programs in regards to accounting and disbursements.