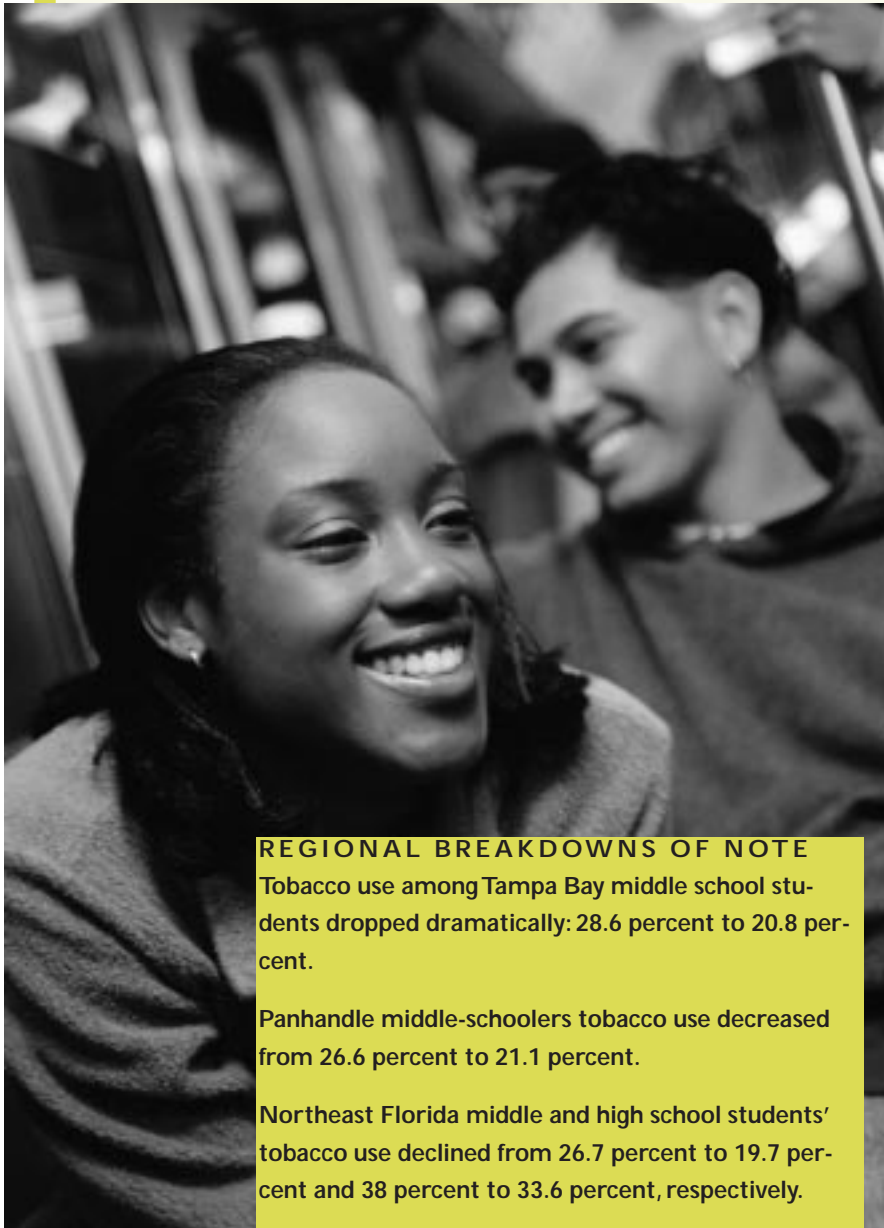


# the health advisor

**Florida Department of Health**

**Mission:**  
Promote and protect the health and safety of all Floridians.

**May 1999**



**REGIONAL BREAKDOWNS OF NOTE**  
Tobacco use among Tampa Bay middle school students dropped dramatically: 28.6 percent to 20.8 percent.

Panhandle middle-schoolers tobacco use decreased from 26.6 percent to 21.1 percent.

Northeast Florida middle and high school students' tobacco use declined from 26.7 percent to 19.7 percent and 38 percent to 33.6 percent, respectively.

North Central Florida saw significant drops among both middle and high school students' tobacco use (24.5 percent to 18.9 percent and 35.5 percent to 30 percent, respectively).

Middle school students' tobacco use in South Central Florida increased from 27.8 percent to 29.3 percent.

## Tobacco Pilot Program Getting Results

Secretary Brooks was joined March 23 by representatives from the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association and the American Lung Association as he released new findings from the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey. The results followed a report showing teen smoking dropped 10 percent in the year since Florida's groundbreaking Tobacco Pilot Program began.

**The reduction in youth smoking, coming after years of rising youth tobacco use nationwide, is the latest in a string of promising results for the year-old program.**

Cigar, cigarette and smokeless tobacco use among middle school students decreased most significantly in the 12 months of the campaign, according to the survey — dropping 16 percent, 19 percent and 29 percent respectively. Cigarette use declined at every grade level in middle and high school in 1999 compared to 1998.

"I think it is very important that we continue a more comprehensive program that addresses tobacco prevalence among youth and young adults," Secretary Brooks said.

"I am encouraged by these preliminary results," said Gov. Jeb Bush. "It is important that this program is given an opportunity for

continued success; that's why I have supported \$61.5 million in funding for the Florida Tobacco Pilot Program in next year's budget."

The results provide more detail on youth tobacco use in Florida.

The most dramatic decreases in smoking were seen among non-Hispanic white students, who have generally the highest rates of cigarette use. Non-Hispanic black students in both middle and high school continue to have the lowest rates of cigarette use.

The reduction in youth smoking, coming after years of rising youth tobacco use nationwide, is the latest in a string of promising results for the year-old program. Membership in the program's 11-month-old youth advocacy group, Students Working Against Tobacco, recently topped 8,000. What's more, a telephone survey of teens in September showed nine out of 10 teens were aware of the program's irreverent youth-targeted advertising campaign, dubbed "truth" by the teens who helped develop it.

"Bottom line: the Florida Tobacco Pilot Program is working," said Jack Conroy, chairman of the American Cancer Society, Florida Division Public Issues Committee.

"More importantly, this program is saving our children from tobacco use."

The Florida Youth Tobacco Survey, designed by the Florida Department of Health in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, anonymously surveyed more than 20,000 public middle and high school students across the state in both February 1998 and February 1999 on their attitudes and behavior regarding tobacco.

## HIV-Related Deaths in Florida Drop for Third Straight Year

FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW, THE NUMBER OF HIV-RELATED DEATHS IN FLORIDA HAS DROPPED. HIV-RELATED DEATHS PEAKED AT 4,336 IN 1995, THEN DROPPED 29 PERCENT IN 1996 AND AN ADDITIONAL 39 PERCENT IN 1997. IN 1998, THERE WERE 1,530 HIV-RELATED DEATHS, REPRESENTING A FURTHER ANNUAL DECLINE OF 19 PERCENT AND AN OVERALL DECLINE OF 65 PERCENT SINCE 1995.

"This pattern of decline is cause for guarded optimism, not complacency," said Secretary Brooks, noting that approximately 82,500 Floridians are living with HIV infection or AIDS, according to current Department of Health estimates. "I am pleased to see that for many people with HIV or AIDS, life is being extended through the use of antiretroviral drugs and preventive therapy, but there are certain disparities that warrant our special attention."

From 1997 to 1998, there were larger reductions of HIV-related deaths among white men (34 percent) and Hispanic men (25 percent) than black men (19 percent). Declines of 19 percent and 22 percent occurred among white women and Hispanic women, respectively. However, the number of HIV-related deaths increased by 2 percent among black women from 1997 to 1998.

In 1998, the greatest number of HIV-related deaths, 559, occurred among black men, followed by 405 deaths in black women. Thus, blacks account for a total of 964 or 63 percent of the 1,530 HIV-related deaths in 1998, but comprise only 14 percent of the state's population. Among white men, there were 338 HIV-related deaths in 1998, and among Hispanic men, there were 135. The corresponding numbers for white women and Hispanic women were 60 and 29 HIV-related deaths, respectively.

**"This pattern of decline is cause for guarded optimism, not complacency."**

Secretary Brooks

Brooks said the Department of Health is committed to finding ways to address the disproportionately higher HIV-death rate for blacks, including:

**Working with minority, community-based organizations to implement cultural sensitive HIV prevention and treatment programs;**

see p. 3 → →



The Department of Health serves Floridians and visitors with integrity, teamwork, accountability, professionalism, quality, caring and community partnerships.

# Volunteer Services

## REGION 9 Palm Beach

The Palm Beach County Health Department held its 21st Annual Volunteer Recognition luncheon on March 19, 1999 to honor more than 300 volunteers and 100 community partners. These volunteers gave more than 40,000 hours to the 7 health centers and other ancillary sites last year.

This year's top award, the C.L. Brumback Volunteer Service Award, was given to Patricia Keys of Riviera Beach, who volunteers at the West Palm Beach Health Center. Ms. Keys was chosen to receive this top award for her seven years of hard work, loyalty and dedicated service as a volunteer of the health department. Retiring after a 15-year career as a Health Department OB/GYN Nurse Practitioner and Nursing Supervisor at the Lantana/Lake Worth Health Center, Ms. Keys returned in 1993 as a volunteer with the Immunization Outreach Program. From there, she worked in the Maternity/Family Planning Clinic and Direct Service Immunizations Program in Riviera Beach. She also became a Case Manager for abnormal pap in 1994. Ms. Keys continues as a case manager and now works in the medical records department and continues to assist in the immunization clinics at Riviera Beach Jupiter Pre-School program and administers flu vaccines in Riviera Beach.

## CHILDREN'S MEDICAL SERVICES West Palm Beach

In addition to the many medical, dental, and clerical services that the Department of Health receives from volunteers, donations of material goods from individuals and organizations are making a difference in the lives of departmental clients.

Nowhere is this more obvious than the Children's Medical Services clinic in West Palm Beach. According to Marti Thorndike, clinic social worker, the clinic benefits from donations all year long from organizations such as the Jupiter Medical Center Thrift Store, WEAT/FM Radio, and American Legion (40 and 8). Donations come in the form of toys, candy, baby equipment, and even cash.

"The donations mean a lot to our clients," Ms. Thorndike said. "We so enjoy the smiles we get to see when the children are presented with a new doll or stuffed animal. It is fun for us to help the children take their minds off of their problems for awhile."

The Asphalt Angels Classic Car Club adopted Children's Medical Services West Palm Beach as a project in 1995. Since that time, they have organized two fundraisers every year. The clinic benefits from the proceeds of a Halloween Car Show and a '50s Spring Fling Dance. The car club also sponsored the Christmas party that included 250 gifts for the children and a camera and film so that each child could go home with a photo of his or her self with Santa.

After most major holidays, a donation of candy is made by Eckerd Drugs. This makes everyone smile! The candy is used for parties and treats for the children.

A retired nurse, Ms. Betty Mattson, comes in to the clinic weekly to file, photocopy and perform various other odd jobs for the staff. She has been doing this for almost ten years and is known affectionately to everyone as "Miss Betty."

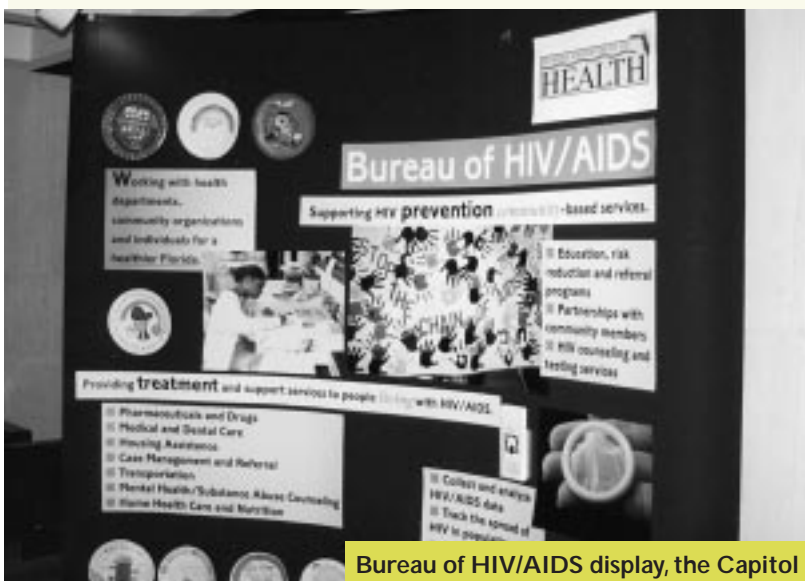
The West Palm Beach Children's Medical Services clinic estimates that the donations given during fiscal year 1997-1998 total approximately \$10,000. The actual value though, when seen through the eyes of the children, is priceless.



**"We so enjoy the smiles we get to see when the children are presented with a new doll or stuffed animal. It is fun for us to help the children take their minds off of their problems for awhile."**

Marti Thorndike, Children's Medical Services

## Public Health Week



Bureau of HIV/AIDS display, the Capitol



TB display, the Capitol

**Tallahassee** This year's public health week, April 5-11, was celebrated in downtown Tallahassee in the Capitol on April 8. Ten Department of Health programs were represented by setting up display booths in the Capitol's rotunda. Department of Health staff were on hand to answer questions about the Department and its programs and to bring awareness to all of the crucial initiatives currently being developed in public health.

This year's theme, Healthy People in Healthy Communities, encourages Floridians to take an active part in building the health of their communities through partnerships and personal involvement.

### Public Health Week in Manatee County Celebrated with Enthusiasm and Pride

**Manatee CHD** A three-person committee (Maria Pelegrina, Phyllis Dunwoody and Connie George) organized a mini Health Fair for Public Health Week and World Health Day on April 7 at the DeSoto Square Mall in Bradenton. Activities included displays with brochures and posters promoting health department services in the center court inside the mall. Staff from different programs were available to answer questions. Both the adult and child health mobile units were parked in front of the mall's main entrance and offered free blood-pressure and blood-sugar testing, immunizations and WIC certifications.

Two participants were surprised to discover they had high blood sugar and were very happy they had stopped to take advantage of this free service.

# So, that's what they do

## DIVISION OF MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

- MQA acts as the central administrative structure for 35 different health care professions.
- MQA currently regulates approximately 618,000 active licensees.
- MQA processed approximately 12,000 requests for public documents and approximately 20,000 requests for certification of licensure last year.
- MQA regulates approximately 12,500 allied health facilities, such as dental laboratories, pharmacies, etc.
- In 1997, MQA centralized many administrative functions, which significantly reduced response time to consumers.
- More than 5,000 pharmacies are inspected annually to determine compliance with Board of Pharmacy regulations.
- One hundred thirty-five new Nursing Home Administrators were licensed last year.
- More than 1,000 nursing assistants are added to the registry each month.
- The Florida Board of Nursing is the fourth largest in the country (and quickly approaching third).
- There are 217,000 nurses holding active Florida licenses.
- The Florida Board of Nursing has approved 84 nursing programs in the state of Florida.
- Approximately 1500 providers have been approved by the Florida Board of Nursing for continuing education in nursing.
- The Florida Board of Nursing processes approximately 20,000 applications per year.
- A complaint against a health care practitioner is confidential until 10 days after probable cause is found, at which time it becomes a matter of public record.
- On July 1, 1999, the Department of Health will make *Practitioner Profiles* available to consumers on the internet.
- The profile will contain biographical, educational, professional and disciplinary data about M.D.'s, D.O.'s, podiatrists and chiropractic physicians.
- Practitioner profile information will empower consumers to make informed decisions regarding health care.



## National Children's Dental Health Month

In celebration of National Children's Dental Health Month, the Florida Department of Health's Preventive Dental Program in conjunction with the Indian River Community College (IRCC) School of Dental Hygiene sponsored a free dental sealant clinic Saturday Feb. 20 at the IRCC new dental clinic. Dental sealants are a preventive dental health measure in which a plastic coating is put on the back teeth. Most tooth decay in children occurs in these areas because of pits and grooves that are hard to keep clean. A sealant coats and protects these areas to prevent decay. Twenty-seven area children were provided this worthwhile service with a total of 86 sealants being placed on their teeth by the IRCC dental hygiene students. Toni C. DeBiase of the Florida Department of Health's Regional Preventive Emergency Referral Dental Program coordinated the project along with Mary Pelletier, IRCC instructor of dental hygiene. The Beanie Baby "Erin" was presented for a door prize. A dental screening was also performed on each child, and parents and children viewed dental health educational videos during arrival.

## HIV-Related Deaths in Florida Drop for Third Straight Year → → from cover

**Facilitating efforts of black clergy and their congregations to mobilize risk-reduction education and supportive attitudes from within the community; and**

**Continuing to work with legislative and other community leaders to assure enhanced resources in areas of greatest unmet need.**

Brooks said that HIV prevention must remain a primary concern, while the HIV mortality statistics reveal several additional challenges. Among the challenges: provide more targeted outreach to people in need of HIV testing and referral for treatment; help those HIV-positive patients who are receiving antiretroviral drugs and preventive therapy to maintain their medication schedules; and increase access to HIV-related medical care.

"The HIV death data indicate that overall we are making progress in fighting this devastating epidemic," Brooks said. "The strategy is to continue to encourage and fund culturally appropriate prevention and treatment initiatives throughout the state."

## Getting ready for year 2000



### Update on the Department of Health's technology compliance activities

For the past year, the Department of Health has been preparing its statewide systems for Year 2000 compliance. In March, a statewide meeting call was held to review DOH efforts and reporting. Additionally, Year 2000 Executive Management Team workgroup was established to oversee compliance activities agency-wide. With members including Secretary Brooks and the deputy secretaries of the department, Year 2000 issues can be addressed across the entire agency.

The Division of Administration's Bureau of General Services recently formed a workgroup to address compliance problems in commonly used equipment such as telephone systems, fax machines; and building security systems. A formalized method for reporting significant, mission-critical problems was established so that particular concerns can be elevated to the attention of the Y2K Executive Management Team. By June 30, 1999, the Department of Health plans to have checked and replaced everything necessary. Several sites have nearly completed their readiness activities. Check the Year 2000 web site on the Department of Health's intranet for more information and updates! Help assure that we can provide uninterrupted service to the public at the change of the millennium.

## Health Care Heroes

Miami-Dade CHD Annie Neasman, RN, MS, the executive administrator of the Miami-Dade County Health Department, is one of three finalists for the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Health Care Heroes Award. This award is given annually to recognize an individual, institution, volunteer and community program for their consistent display of dedication to health care beyond the scope of their jobs.

The finalists will be honored and the award recipient announced at a luncheon at Miami's Wyndham Hotel.

## Does something need fixin'? Call the Whistle-blower's Hotline!

**TOLL FREE 1-800-543-5353**  
**IN TALLAHASSEE CALL 922-1060**

The Whistle-blower's Hotline is a state employees' hotline for reporting:

**Gross Mismanagement**  
**Illegal or Fraudulent Conduct**  
**Gross Waste of Funds**  
**Gross Neglect of Duty**

The Whistle-blower's Hotline is not for general complaints or suggestions. Other means are available for resolving personnel problems or recommending cost-saving measures.

### NEW SITES

You may have noticed that our intranet now has a new homepage graphic and navigation menu. Recently the navigation menus on both the internet and intranet sites were improved to help employees and the public navigate the sites.

In March, the Division of Disease Control, Bureau of Epidemiology, implemented new sites on the DOH internet and intranet. These sites provide a resource for providing information about infectious diseases, surveillance, case and outbreak investigation, and training in epidemiology. They are the premier source of information about infectious and chronic diseases and advancements in epidemiology.

### COMING SOON

Look for this information coming soon to the DOH webs:

**Florida Health Information Systems Council**  
**Correctional Medical Authority**  
**AG Holley TB Hospital**  
**AIDS Clinic Search**  
**New Intranet Homepage design**

### WEB BULLETINS

Web bulletins help inform the public and employees. Our websites continue to be a good resource for informing DOH employees and the public about the changing world of public health. During March, web bulletins were used to provide information

about an Emergency Operations grant proposal, World TB Day, and news for employees about computer viruses. They were also used to promote training opportunities for the Emergency Operations Florida Symposium and Environmental Justice Training. If you are interested in posting information on the websites, contact your web managers, Jill Schaeffer (intranet) or Jo Ann Steele (internet).

### WEB MANAGER OF THE MONTH

**MARCH Dale Austin, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Data Analysis**

Presented in recognition of developing an extensive website on the Department of Health's Intranet. This site provides statistical data that is used to plan and evaluate health programs. This site enhances knowledge of employees and promotes accountability, integrity; and efficiency in government.

**APRIL Marek Pawlowicz, Bureau of Laboratories**

This website allows the Bureau of Laboratory Services to update testing methods and procedures for collection of specimens in a timely and efficient manner. The site also allows viewers to learn more about certain laboratory procedures and provides previously difficult to comprehend information in a format that is easier to understand.

## Cremo Scores 2 Gold Medals In Senior Classic

Lee CHD Ron Cremo, Acting STD Supervisor at the Lee County Health Department, dashed away with two medals in February at the Lee Island Coast Senior Classic, a qualifying event for the Florida State

Senior Games. Winning the 100 Yard Dash in 13.7 seconds and the 200 in 28.8 seconds, he qualified for December's state championship games, sponsored by the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

For more information, please check the Emergency Operations page on the DOH internet or intranet website.



**The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness**

## the advisor

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**Robert G. Brooks, MD, Secretary**

Please send stories, preferably on disk or by cc:mail, to Parizek, William, by the first of each month.

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