

dhhs Employee UPDATE

Our Mission: To serve the people of North Carolina by enabling individuals, families and communities to be healthy and secure, and to achieve social and economic well-being.

A monthly publication for employees of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Graduation ceremony held for the first class of Leadership DHHS

The first class of *Leadership DHHS* successfully completed the six month program and was honored during a graduation ceremony held at the Healing Place on the Dorothea Dix Hospital Campus on March 19th. Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom addressed the graduates with congratulations and appreciation of their hard work, dedication and interest in the future of the Department of Health and Human Services. She reinforced the importance of this outstanding leadership development program and its impact on preparing future leaders to take on the challenges to come in health and human services. The event was well attended by division directors, managers of the graduates and members of the DHHS Succession Planning Work Group. In addition to receiving plaques and recognition of their accomplishments, the graduates presented team projects that focused on



2006 Leadership DHHS graduates

topics relative to enhancing staff recruitment, development and retention as well as services to DHHS consumers. Five projects were presented:

- **Livable and Senior-Friendly Communities** addressed the social and economic opportunities and supports for senior citizens;
- **NC Nursing Fellows-Excellence in Health Care** developed a recruitment strategy to fill the need for Nurses;

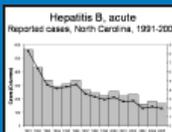
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- **Plugging the Drain: A Model for Employee Growth, Morale & Retention** which focused on strategies to develop and retain employees in DHHS;
- **Assessment of Management support for the DHHS Wellness Initiative;** and
- **The Other Side of Orientation: Enhancing the Departmental Welcoming Process,** which focused on strategies for a smooth, well-informed entry to jobs in DHHS.

Heather Laffler with the Division of Child Development commenting on her team's project stating that "Our team decided to make our presentation interesting and memorable by requiring audience participation."

The graduates were very positive about what they learned and the benefits they received.

Jim Koger with the Office of Policy and Planning commented "Leadership DHHS gave me an opportunity to network with fellow DHHS employees who are very bright and innovative."

The list of graduates who completed the six month program include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Michael Adamio
Office of the Controller | Dale Hill
Division of Facility Services |
| Pearla Alston
Division of Human Resources | Kimberly Hoke
Division of Public Health |
| Nate Carmichael
Cherry Hospital, MHDDSAS | Jim Koger
Office of Policy & Planning |
| Tracy Colvard
Division of Medical Assistance | Kathy Lackey
Division of Facility Services |
| Gary Cyrus
Division of Aging
and Adult Services | Heather Laffler
Division of Child
Development |
| Asa Fleming
Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation Services | Kathryn Lanier
Division of Aging
and Adult Services |
| Mary Healy
Divisions of Facility Services
and Child Development | Steve Murphy
Division of Service
for the Blind |
| Sheila Higgins
Division of Public Health | Kristy Osterhut
Division of Public Health |

- Mark Prakke
Division of Information
Resource Management
- April Reese
Division of Public Health
- Jennifer Smith
Disability Determination
Services - DVR
- Karen Smith
Office of Procurement
and Contracting Services
- Alma Taylor
Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation Services
- Samuel Teruel-Velez
Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation Services
- Michael Viar
Office of Education Services
- Lori Walston
Office of Public Affairs
- Mike Zeinstra,
Division of Human
Resources

Pearla Alston with Human Resources at the Secretary's Office said, "The program was good exposure to other agencies within DHHS."

The department is planning to continue the Leadership DHHS program on a schedule of at least once a year. If the first class is any indication, we believe future classes will be equally successful as the department continues its efforts to recruit and train new leaders for the future. ■

DHHS Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom Honored By Academy

Each year the North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians (NCAFP) recognizes individuals whose work and efforts make significant impacts on improving healthcare. DHHS Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom was honored by the NCAFP on April 8 at the Spring CME Lowdown in Charleston, SC and was presented with an NCAFP Distinguished Service Award for her progressive leadership.

NCAFP recognized Secretary Hooker Odom as a strong supporter and advocate for enhancing primary care access to citizens in North Carolina.

In the award recognition NCAFP stated, "She's also been a visionary who's recognized that big risks bring big rewards. Early on Secretary Hooker Odom saw the power that

coordination and integration can have on managing complex disease. Today, our state has one of the most advanced care management networks in the country with Community Care.

There are numerous other ways she's made an impact. All of them

demonstrate a clear passion, a clear purpose and a clear understanding. Her progressive and inclusive leadership style has enabled her to take action and improve many critical areas, as well as to embrace innovative concepts." ■



Pictured left to right: Allen Dobeson, MD, DHHS Assistant Secretary for Health Policy and Medical Assistance, Sue Makey, Executive VP for NCAFP, Carson Rounds, MD, President NCAFP, Jim Jones MD, Secretary Hooker Odom, Karen Smith, MD, Past President and Board Chair of NCAFP, Tommy Newton, MD, Peyton Maynard Government Affairs for NCAFP

Withers Named Director of DSDHH

Jan Withers has been named director of the Division of Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH).

"I'm very pleased to announce that Jan Withers has agreed to be director of the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing," said Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom. "She has been interim director for a year and is a really good fit for this job. She has many years of experience in human services at a number of levels.

"During her time with the division she has been instrumental to our work with the people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Her work to coordinate

policies on issues like housing and transportation has shown precisely the kind of big picture thinking that will make her a great division director."



Jan Withers

Withers worked in the mental health arena as a therapist for the Foothills Area Program in Morganton. Her experience also includes work in education as director of Student Support Services at the North Carolina School for the Deaf. She also spent a number of years as an independent consultant helping professionals and agencies become better at working with people who are deaf and hard of hearing, particularly in mental health settings. She joined the DSDHH in 2002 as a program planner.

Withers is a graduate of Davidson College and received an MA in Counseling from Gallaudet University. ■

Vodicka Recognized with Award

Sherée Thaxton Vodicka of the N.C. Division of Public Health was named North Carolina Dietetic Association (NCDA) Member of the Year for 2005-2006 at the organization's annual meeting in April.

Vodicka coordinates integrated marketing and communications efforts for the N.C. Division of Public Health's Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch around healthy eating, physical activity and healthy weight for all North Carolinians (see www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com). She is a Registered Dietitian with 18 years of experience interpreting complex nutrition and health information for the public.

The Member of the Year award is the highest recognition the NCDA bestows on its members. The award is made annually based on professional achievement and participation in national, state and regional dietetic association activities during the past year or years. The winner must demonstrate significant contributions to the profession through employment and voluntary work.

Vodicka earned a bachelor's degree in dietetics from the University of Kentucky and a master's degree in mass communication from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She serves the NCDA as marketing chair, and has served on the Raleigh District Dietetic Association's Board of Directors for 11 years.

The North Carolina Dietetic Association (www.eatrightnc.org) is one of 50 state associations affiliated with the Chicago-based American Dietetic Association. NCDA's 1,500 Registered Dietitian members advocate for the

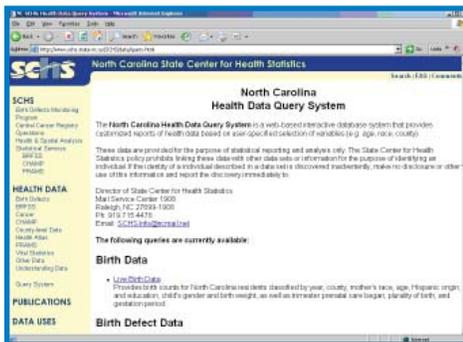


Sherée Vodicka, holding her award, poses with Tracey Bates, MPH, RD, LDN, president of the North Carolina Dietetic Association.

nutrition profession and serve the public through the promotion of optimal nutrition, health and well-being. ■

SCHS launches Web-based health data query system

Need some health or population data?



The State Center for Health Statistics has broadened the usability of its Web site by expanding its Health Data Query System at www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/query.html.

By choosing different variables such as year, county, race, gender or health concerns such as a specific disease or type of birth defect, users can produce customized tables of data for live births, deaths, and birth defects. There are also two different population data searches to provide specific population counts. The population data query feature is brand new, and should be very useful to address target populations and other health program issues.



Jalil Isa

iSalud y Saludos!

'FORO Latino'

The University of North Carolina-Greensboro will host "FORO Latino" May 20-21st. This is the 11th annual conference organized by the Raleigh-based Latino advocacy non-profit, El Pueblo. The organization is probably best known for putting together one of the state's largest Hispanic-themed festivals, "Fiesta del Pueblo." 'Foro' draws only a fraction of the more than 60,000 that attend the annual "Fiesta." But 'Foro' caters to an entirely different audience. Whereas people going "Fiesta" at the North Carolina State Fairgrounds generally go with the intent of having as much fun as possible and learn more about the Hispanic culture in the process, there is a narrower focus at 'Foro'. The workshops at the forum cover lots of topics. But they all serve to either educate Latinos who want to learn more about themselves and how to better assimilate into this new place for them...or to the non-Latinos wanting to learn more about their new neighbors.

The combination works well at 'Foro'. The yearly event usually draws individuals from all across the state and from various different sectors. You may find a doctor who is trying to learn more about the Title VI requirements he is subject to or you may find a Latina trying to expand her education about domestic violence. Title VI of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits discrimination based on several categories—including national origin—and this, in turn, has been interpreted to include those with Limited English

Proficiency. In other words, any agency receiving *federal* dollars must provide individuals—regardless of their limited English—meaningful access to services.

The two will likely come across one another at various times throughout the weekend-long event—whether that be during lunch, dinner, or at any of the number of social events held at 'Foro'. There will be a screening of a documentary on one of the nights, there may also be live musical entertainment, and there will be plenty of time to mingle throughout the weekend.

Like last year, I served on the committee that helped organize this year's event. But this has been an unusual year for El Pueblo. The organization has a new executive director. And the person heading the coordination of this year's 'Foro' moved to a new position at another organization in the months leading up to the event. So El Pueblo has undoubtedly faced some challenges this year in setting up 'Foro'. But the group helping with the coordination efforts is as committed as in previous years.

This year's 'Foro' will feature workshops on: minority health disparities, cultural competency, efforts to reduce auto accidents (a leading killer for Latinos), Title VI, housing, employment, education, government...and many more topics. The event will also include exhibitors. There are always dozens of state-wide and local organizations that chose this as an event to make their presence. They understand those attending this event are individuals who see the value in learning more about the Hispanic culture. The exhibitors also realize the benefit of educating those present.

There is a special component of 'Foro' which has always been a tradition—Youth 'Foro'. The weekend event will have a separate, concurrent forum dedicated exclusively to youths from around the state. At the 'Youth 'Foro' ('Foro' Juvenil), the younger participants will have an opportunity to learn about topics that are more relevant to their lives as immigrants—or the children of immigrants—and discover ways to become more productive citizens. The kids will also have a chance to interact with the adults at the conclusion of both events. Usually, they leave the crowds from both 'Foro's' with inspiring words that only youth can deliver.

If you'd like more information on the event, you can visit El Pueblo's website at elpueblo.org. The kids pay \$55 for their 'Foro' registration dues. Adults pay an additional \$50. It is two days packed with lots of learning. So if you're planning on attending, make sure you get adequate sleep! ■

Impact of Immunization Initiatives on Acute Hepatitis B Incidence in North Carolina (1991-2005)

Prepared by Patricia Poole, RN, Hepatitis B coordinator, NC Immunization Branch, and Jean-Marie Maillard, MD, MSc, medical epidemiologist, General Communicable Disease Control Branch.

Hepatitis B is a disease caused by a highly infectious virus. It can lead to severe illness, liver damage and death. Each year in the United States, more than 80,000 people become infected with hepatitis B virus. Many newly infected persons develop life-long infection and have higher risks of liver-related complications. Hepatitis B complications cause approximately 5,000 deaths due to liver failure and another 1,500 deaths due to liver cancer each year in the United States. Hepatitis B virus is the most common cause of liver cancer in the world today.

Infected persons often do not have symptoms and may not be aware they are infected; however, they are capable of infecting others. Hepatitis B virus can be passed from one person to another through exposure to blood and other body fluids. Disease may be spread from an infected person to another person in the following ways:

- Having unprotected sex (without using a condom)
- During birth from an infected mother to her newborn infant
- Contact with blood or open sores of an infected person
- Sharing personal items such as razors, nail clippers or tooth brushes
- Using nonsterile needles in body or ear piercing, injecting drug use, tattooing, or acupuncture

Since 1990, North Carolina state law requires vaccination of infants born to infected women. In 1994, North Carolina became a universal state, providing hepatitis B vaccine to all children at no cost. Additionally, state immunization law requires the hepatitis B vaccination series for all children born since July 1, 1994.

In 1995, North Carolina launched a statewide initiative to offer hepatitis B vaccinations to susceptible sixth graders in on-site school clinics. This strategy was implemented to provide protection to unvaccinated children prior to the age when they may become sexually active or experiment with illicit drugs.

Since the program began, the number of reported new cases of hepatitis B in North Carolina has declined by 77 percent. (Figure 1 on next page.) The greatest reduction in cases has been among people 19 and younger, with a 91 percent decline. The number of cases in people 20 and older has declined by 75 percent. (Figure 2 on next page.)

Immunization efforts have successfully reduced the number of acute hepatitis B cases in North Carolina. This reduction in newly infected people means there will be fewer chronic liver infections, thus reducing risks of exposure and reducing complications from hepatitis B disease. The full effect of the reduced number of acute hepatitis B infections will become more evident as vaccinated infants and children advance in age. The public health benefit of this immunization program will bring immeasurable dividends for years to come.

For more information about the North Carolina Hepatitis B Prevention Program, contact: Patricia Poole, R.N., North Carolina Immunization Branch, at 919.707.5573. ■

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FIGURE 1

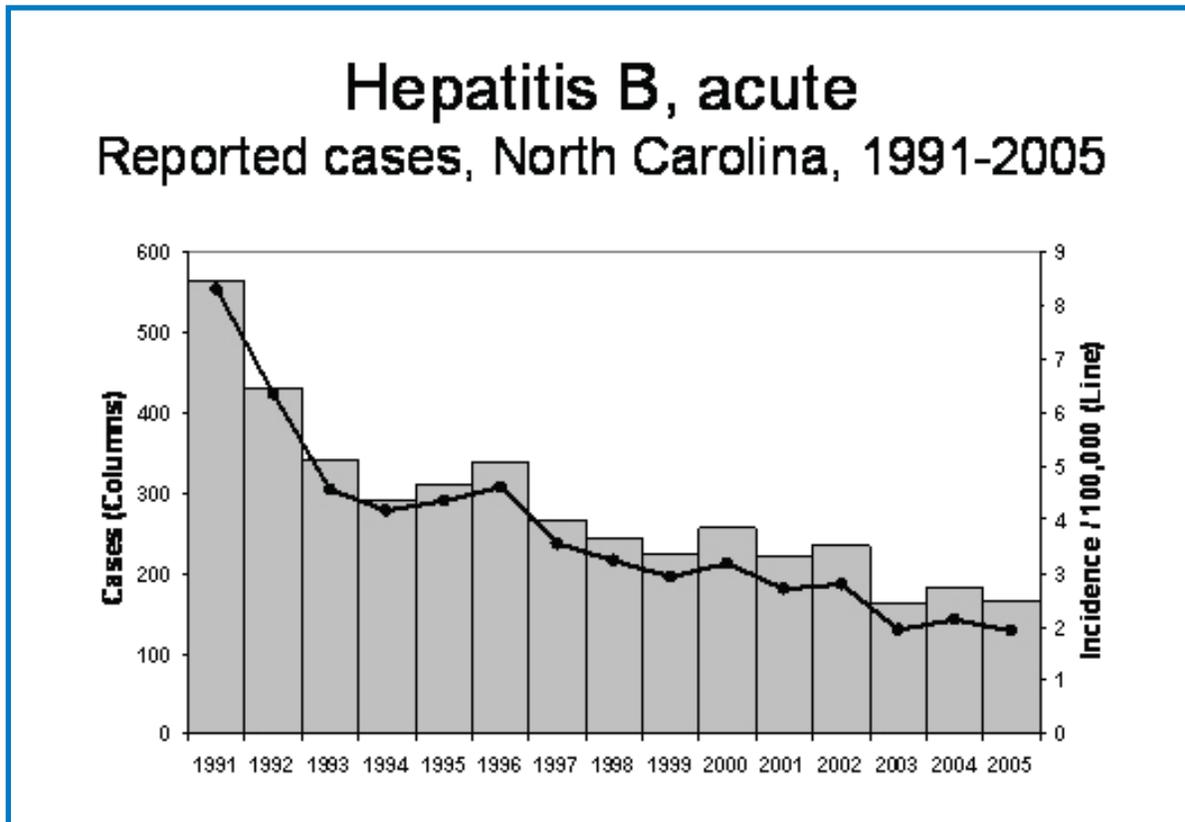
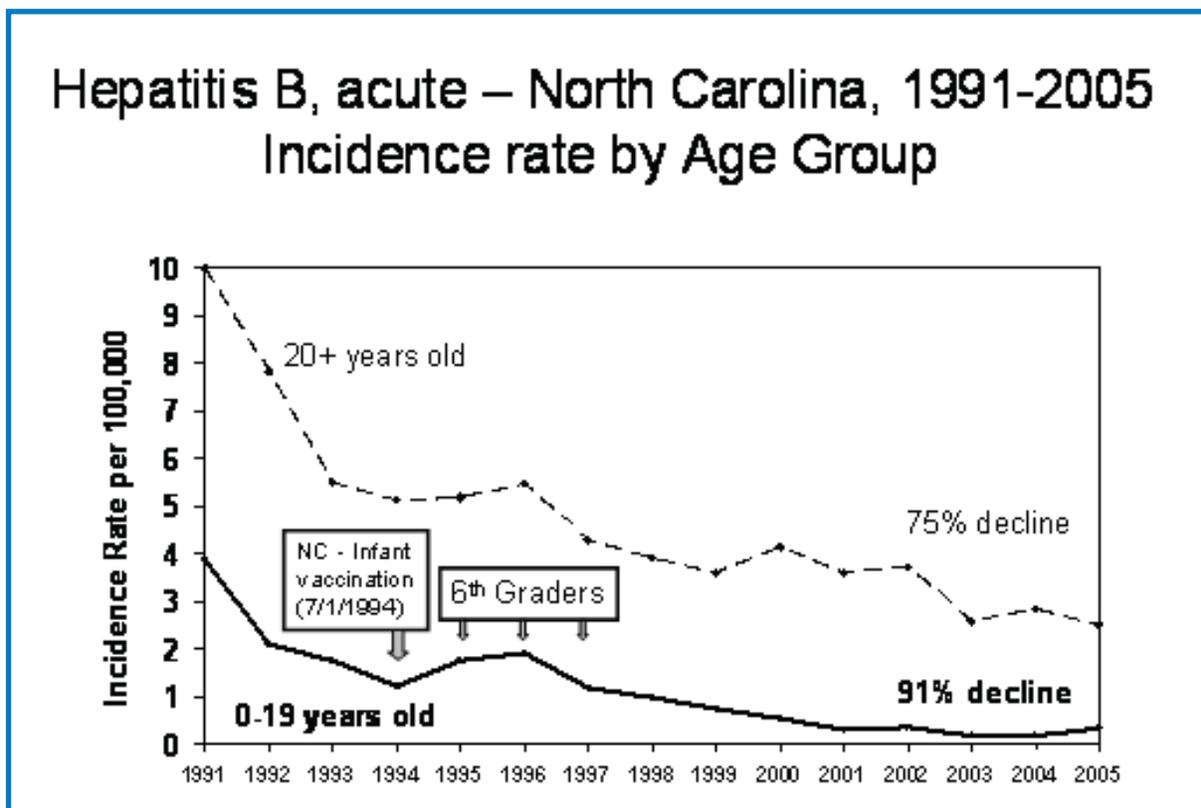


FIGURE 2



Bunny Info

It was another great year for the bunny drive. Thank you for your contribution. There were 1,177 bunnies, chicks and other furry critters collected. These furry friends were distributed to the following facilities:

Wake Children's ER
Wake Pediatric Unit
Wake Rehab
Tammy Lynn Center
Dix Hospital
Rex Hospital
Rex Rehab
Duke Children's Hospital
Johnston Memorial Hospital
Western Wake Hospital
Parrish Nursing Home and Rehab
Liberty Commons Nursing and Rehab Center
Wake Interfaith Hospitality Network

A special thank you to Katie Berndt, Annette Clifton, Brenda Hodges, Michele Godwin, Brenda Eason, Debbie Souza, Ann Griffin Hall, Martha Long, Jenni Hight, Ann Rudd, Trevon Lucas, Robyn Slate, Barbara Whitaker and Connie Rhynes, whose hard work makes the bunny drive possible and a huge success each year.



Adoption Profile

Introducing Alicia, James, and Ashley

Alicia, James, and Ashley are energetic and outgoing children. They all consciously try to do what is right and have been good role models to other children.

A Closer Look at Alicia

Alicia is an outgoing young woman with a lot to offer and the potential to be a big success in life. She is somewhat shy at first meeting, but once she is comfortable she loves to talk about what is going on in her life. Although she loves being with other people, Alicia is trying to become more independent and working on what her priorities in life should be. Personal appearance is important to Alicia, as she likes to always be at her best. She is loyal to her family and friends and respectful to adults. Alicia attends a school where the smaller classroom size allows her to receive the attention she needed to thrive academically. She intends to be the first in her family to graduate from high school and, although she doesn't yet know what career path she wants to follow, she intends to further her education. Alicia is working on staying on the positive path in her life, but occasional redirection helps her get back to it if she veers off a bit.

Birthday: April 29, 1988



Alicia, b. April 29, 1988
James, b. May 30, 1990
Ashley, b. June 26, 1992

A Closer Look at James

James is a terrific young man and a positive role model to others in his cottage. He is able to show them how things should be done and holds them accountable. James has many friends and is looked up to and respected by them. He is athletic and loves to play basketball or just be outdoors. The smaller class size that James attends also helps him be academically successful and he makes the A/B honor roll nearly every grading period. Counseling is helping James learn appropriate methods of expressing his frustrations and he will need to continue working on this for awhile.

Birthday: May 30, 1990

A Closer Look at Ashley

According to her group home staff, Ashley has an incredibly positive attitude and is a thrill to have in their cottage. She tries to get along with everyone and do what is right at all times. She is somewhat of a social butterfly and loves being with people. She enjoys cheerleading, basketball, and playing Gameboy. Ashley's smaller class size is allowing her to gain some much needed academic basics, while tutoring in reading will help her be more successful, as well. Ashley tries very hard to make good decisions in her life and when redirection is necessary, she accepts it without hassle.

Birthday: June 26, 1992

A Family for Alicia, James, and Ashley

It is important that these children find a nurturing, supportive home that will adopt them together. Alicia will soon reach the age of maturity, but will still need a permanent home with her siblings. An adoptive family for these delightful children will provide them with the encouragement to continue their education and pursue their dreams. They will provide them with stability, consistency, and the structure that allows them all to be successful in their own right. (NC #011-2521) (NC #011-2519) (NC #011-2520) ■