

# 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

June 8, 2009

**To: ALL EMPLOYEES OF THE NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**From: Lanier M. Cansler**

**Re: We Will Focus On Success**

I have no doubt that each of you in the past 12 months has experienced financial changes in your lives. You have had to manage your households with less, you have paid more to pump gas into your cars and you have been forced to cut back on recreational pleasures and had fewer opportunities for the things you once enjoyed.

We have all endured financial changes in our lives as our nation, our state and our families struggle to find ways of doing the same things with a lot less. This challenging trend is not expected to change anytime soon. Some economists predict things will never be the same again.

Remember that line from the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz* when Dorothy said, "Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore"? We might have a similar feeling as we begin to consider and deal with the changes that will occur in DHHS programs and services as a result of impending budget reductions.

The budget that was proposed by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services last week reflects reductions that are historic in nature and unprecedented in amount. The reductions will impact every division and office of our Department, every provider that partners with us in the delivery of care and services, and in some way every individual we serve in North Carolina. This is not a short-term problem. Financial forecasts indicate that it will be 2013 before the State's revenues return to 2008 levels.

In legislative meetings last week I had attempted to put the reductions in some perspective to emphasize the depth of the cuts to the DHHS budget

by citing two examples: (1) If we eliminated every employee position in the Department, almost 19,000 filled and vacant positions, including all positions in our state facilities, we would achieve only about half the level of budget reductions faced by DHHS, or (2) If we eliminated all divisions related to the Human Services side of our agency (Social Services, Aging and Adult Services, Child Development, Services for the Blind, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.), we would achieve only about half the budget reductions faced by DHHS.

While a large majority of our budget relates to health care and health-related activities, and the health divisions and services are taking the largest financial hits, every one of our offices and divisions is going to have to examine operations and chart new courses to meet the needs of North Carolina's citizens. Hopefully, the Legislature will consider some new revenue options to help reduce the impact on DHHS programs and services such as the Governor's proposed revenue increases on

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tobacco and alcohol, but even then we will not escape unprecedented budget reductions.

I am confident that our DHHS team is up to this challenge. As an organization we have the determination, dedication, and capabilities to take the resources available to us, focus on what's most important for the people we serve, and utilize those resources in the most effective way possible. But we are

not in Kansas anymore, and we can't continue to think and operate as we have in the past. We must reevaluate our priorities and processes. I am calling upon the entire DHHS team to be innovative, explore ways and offer suggestions for improving the way we do things, provide services, and fulfill our responsibilities. If you have ideas for how we can do things better, tell your supervisor or send your ideas directly to me.

Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to the people of North Carolina. Working together, we can meet this challenge and emerge from these difficult financial times a stronger and better focused Department for serving our State's citizens. I look forward to working with you as we strive to meet the needs and expectations of those we serve.



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## **Pay stubs a thing of the past for many in DHHS**

In a cost-saving move, DHHS employees except those employed in the Division of State Operated Facilities will no longer receive printed pay stubs, effective with the June pay period.

The pay stub information, called a "remuneration advice," continues to be available using BEACON, the electronic pay accounting system.

The change is made "in keeping with economizing wherever possible," according to a joint memo from Kathy Gruer, director of the Division of Human Resources, and DHHS Controller Laketha Miller.

The memo was sent to DHHS human resources managers and division and facility directors on June 23. ■

**Employees can review and print their own pay statement [which does not include leave balances] in the following way:**

From the BEACON home page, select the following tabs:

[My Data \[ESS\]](#)

[My Pay](#)

[Pay Statement](#)

To print months prior to the current statement, click the "Previous Salary Statement" arrow.

To display leave balances:

From the BEACON home page, select the following:

[My Data \[ESS\]](#)

[My Working Time](#)

[My Leave Requests](#)

[Quota Overview](#)

# Measures to Conserve Energy



DHHS Assistant Secretary for Finance and Business Operations Dan Stewart suggests that all buildings except for those housing patients should adhere to the following measures to conserve energy and the state's limited state funds during the budgetary shortfall.

He also suggests that following similar steps at home can also save you money. A partial list of money-saving tips follows. A more lengthy list may be found at [www.energync.net/efficiency/government.html](http://www.energync.net/efficiency/government.html).

Stewart suggests that steps 6-31 from the Web page should be reviewed for appropriateness by maintenance and purchasing staff and not used in health care facility buildings that house patients where the determination of appropriate temperatures should be made by the health professionals in charge.

The information in the box to the right is an abbreviated list taken from the same source. ■

1. Alter settings of heating and cooling systems seasonally to save 1 percent to 3 percent of cooling or heating costs for each degree the thermostat is raised during air conditioning season or lowered during heating season.
2. During the winter, set the thermostat to 68° F when the work place is occupied and 65°F after business hours. During the summer, set the thermostat to 76°F when the workplace is occupied, and 80° F after business hours.
3. Adjust workplace schedules to reduce energy use during the hours when there is most demand for electricity. If employees start work earlier or have lunch during the hottest hour of the day, savings can be realized on air conditioning, lighting and other electricity use during the hours of peak electricity demand.
4. Turn off all office equipment and lights every night and weekend. If you can't turn off the whole computer, turn off the monitor and the printer.
5. When purchasing PCs, monitors, printers, fax machines and copiers, consider ENERGY STAR models that "power down" after a user-specified period of inactivity.
6. Install free software from the Environmental Protection Agency that puts monitors in sleep mode when not in use. This can save \$0.085 per kWh of power used by networks.
7. Replace incandescent light lamps with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), wherever appropriate. Compact fluorescents use at least 66 percent less energy and last an average of 10 times longer.
8. Consider removing excess fluorescent lights and installing reflectors. Lighter colored walls require less light to illuminate a room.
9. Retrofit incandescent or fluorescent exit signs with long-lasting, low-energy LED exit signs.
10. Clean dusty diffusers and lamps every 6-12 months for improved lumen output.
11. Turn off the lights when not needed. It is a myth that leaving them on uses less energy than turning them off. Turn off signage and other lights not necessary for security and safety.
12. Open blinds and shades. Turn off lights in unoccupied areas or in spaces with sufficient natural lighting.
13. Use teamwork to reduce lighting loads. Housekeeping staff can work in teams (instead of different areas simultaneously) to reduce lighting usage. This can save up to 20 percent in lighting energy.

## DDS employee recognized for cost-saving suggestion

A Disability Determination Services employee has been recognized for her labor, time and materials saving suggestion through the state's NCThinks Program.

Cynthia Paige Bennett's suggestion earned her three days of special leave, a certificate signed by Gov. Beverly Perdue, and a certificate from Angela Patrick, DHHS's NCThinks coordinator.



Angela Patrick, a benefits consultant with DHHS Human Resources, presents NCThinks certificate to Cynthia Paige Bennett.

NCThinks is the new name for a program formerly known as the State Employee Incentive Bonus Program. It is the state's tool for rewarding state employees for providing innovative solutions to pressing challenges to improve state government services, particularly those resulting in efficiency and economy in state government.

Disability Determination Services (DDS) is the state agency that adjudicates the medical determination on claims for the Social Security Administration. DDS has a contract

with Stone Network, a teledictation service that transcribes reports on Consultative Examinations ordered by their agency for case adjudication.

Stone Network purchased a PC that is located in DDS's Professional Relations Office. This computer is used to send reports to DDS in an electronic format on a daily basis. While the agency processes claims in an electronic environment, this computer is not linked to DDS's internal agency computer

system. Therefore, the process required to print out the reports and scan them into the system required staff in the Professional Relations Office to print an average of 200 reports daily and to sort them by the ordering unit.

Bennett was recognized for suggesting a system to send those reports from Stone Network's computer directly into DDS's internal computer system which was accomplished by using Social Security Administration's secure website so that the reports could be submitted to DDS in an electronic format.

The suggestion eliminated duplicate work by various staff members within the agency, cut down on case processing time, and reduced the amount of paper and toner used throughout the agency.

If you have a suggestion, NCThinks wants to hear from you. You may qualify for a cash award. For more details see: [www.ncthinks.nc.gov](http://www.ncthinks.nc.gov). ■

## Nominate your Pick of the Month

Your DHHS Employee Update is launching a new effort to highlight the unique aspects of your work.

What makes your area special? Tell us what's going on where you work that is different from other work stations. Share a local

tradition that serves to boost morale and encourages those around you.

We want to hear your stories. Each month we will select the most unique idea and share it in your

newsletter. Please submit ideas via email to [Jim.Jones@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Jim.Jones@dhhs.nc.gov). In the SUBJECT line please type IDEA and your work contact phone number. ■

## ConAgra expresses thanks

ConAgra Foods wanted to get the word out. A thank-you to those who have pitched in to provide assistance in the wake of an explosion June 9 that took three employees' lives and seriously injured several others at the food company's Slim Jim packaging plant in Garner.

Corporation CEO Gary Rodkin sent a note from his office in Omaha to area agencies seeking to let those who responded know that he and the corporation's 25,000 workers deeply appreciate the efforts of so many to make a positive difference in an otherwise bad time for the plant's roughly 900 workers.

Some of those targeted for appreciation no doubt include DHHS employees who volunteer in their off-time, such as Joanna Forester, who responded as a mental health Red Cross volunteer. DHHS received a note expressing thanks for the support of the agency and its employees in the wake of the accident.

Response also came from on-duty DHHS personnel, such as staff at Public Health Preparedness and Response who coordinated local and regional occupational and environmental epidemiology specialists who assessed the

situation for employee, responder and area residents' safety.

"I want to express my sincere thanks to your organization and your people for the support you've provided our company in response to the accident in Garner," Rodkin's note states.

"I'm amazed at the heroic efforts of everyone in the community, who have put their lives on hold – and in many cases put their lives on the line – to offer assistance to our Garner employees and our company. You have our deepest gratitude." ■

## New division focuses on quality of care and patient safety

Wishing to emphasize his commitment to keep a hands-on approach to the state-operated MH/DD/SAS facilities, Secretary Lanier Cansler has established the Division of State Operated Healthcare Facilities (DSOHF), formerly the State-Operated Services Section of the MH/DD/SAS Division.

"This change allows us to concentrate on the central mission of our hospitals and other facilities by focusing on the issues of quality of care and patient safety, which is the central core mission of all hospitals and care facilities nationwide," said Deputy Secretary Allen Feezor. "We want to send the message both internally and externally that our Department's focus is on providing essential quality care to the least fortunate of our state's citizens."

J. Luckey Welsh Jr., who joined the agency in late March, will lead the new Division that oversees all 14 state-run MH/DD/SAS/Neuromed facilities.

"Our division has been charged with the responsibility of providing compassionate high quality and safe care for our residents and patients we have the privilege to serve in our facilities," Welsh said. "Our division is committed to achieve in this mission."

Since assuming office, Cansler has concentrated on making improvements to the state MH/DD/SAS services and facilities. He instituted a Zero Tolerance Policy regarding the abuse and/or neglect of patients as well as failure to notify the facility's

administration in the event of any knowledge of any incidents. He also established a Health and Human Services Training and Quality Assurance Initiative under the new Division.

The new division will continue to work collaboratively with the Division of MH/DD/SAS. The MH/DD/SAS Clinical Policy Team will provide support and clinical oversight for services in the DSOHF facilities as well as in the community. It will also support DSOHF through its Resource and Regulatory Management Section, Operations Support Section, Advocacy and Customer Services Section and the Quality Management Team in the Community Policy and Management Section. ■

## Gov. Perdue launches “United We Serve” campaign

The Governor’s Office and the state’s departments and agencies will participate in United We Serve, a national effort launched by President Obama to engage more Americans in serving their communities this summer, Gov. Bev Perdue announced last month.

“These 11 weeks are a time for North Carolinians to take the lead in organizing service projects and forging partnerships with local organizations to get their communities back on track,” Perdue said. “Whether you are working in a soup kitchen, reading to a child or helping out a friend in need, everyone’s small efforts can create some big results.”

The campaign kicked off June 22 and runs through Sept. 11, which will be marked for the first time as a national day of service and remembrance. The initiative focuses on four key areas: education, health, community renewal, and energy and the environment. It is being led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that improves lives and strengthens communities through volunteering and service.

The governor will focus on mentoring during the summer of service campaign. Cabinet secretaries will volunteer with different nonprofits

and advocacy groups throughout the summer as well. The governor also encourages state employees to use their allotted 24 community service hours in support of the initiative and to help get North Carolina back on track. The state effort is complements the work of the N.C. Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service.

The Obama administration created [www.serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov), a Web site that allows visitors to type in their zip code to find local volunteer opportunities and to recruit volunteers by posting their organization’s projects. ■

## Make-A-Wish receives donation

A friendly competition resulted in an overwhelming response in May when employees at the Disability Determination Services office exceeded a \$600 goal and raised more than \$3,800 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Sarah Beth Hunt, front left, development administrator for the foundation in Eastern North Carolina, received the donation from, left to right: Jennifer Pounds, David Kramer, Lisa Hayes, Martha Long and Linda Highsmith. The employees are officers and past officers of the Tar Heel Association of Disability Examiners. ■



# DHHS videos on YouTube, DHHS home page

Video is a new feature on the DHHS website. Embedded YouTube videos on the home page and a video library page show visitors to the Web page some catchy public service announcements.

The Office of Public Affairs' first new video features State Health Director Dr. Jeff Engel with an important message regarding the Pandemic A (H1N1) virus, formerly known as (swine flu). This is a perfect use for the video component of the DHHS website, providing common sense tips as well as an important update on a serious health threat in our state.

The DHHS Office of Public Affairs will be producing more videos with important public service messages, including a message from Secretary Lanier Cansler coming soon.

## YouTube

You can also find us on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/ncdhhs](http://www.youtube.com/ncdhhs). Help increase our ranking on YouTube by accessing this page and our videos from your home computer.

This is an official department channel, maintained by the Office of Public Affairs. Be aware that no other YouTube channel is authorized for any division or office without written permission from the director of Public Affairs.



## Accessibility of Videos on the DHHS Website:

Some steps have been taken to ensure our videos are accessible to people with various disabilities.

- **Keyboard-operated:** The video library page links to versions of the video that are accessible to people with mobility impairments: The controls can be operated with a keyboard, not simply a mouse.
- **For the deaf and hard of hearing:** Videos should either be captioned or a transcript provided. Currently transcripts are provided and options for captioning are being explored.
- **For the blind and visually impaired:** If the audio is not

descriptive enough to understand the message of the video, a transcript with the missing information is provided. For example, the game show videos show the signs of stroke on screen but do not say them aloud. The transcript includes this information.

## Submitting a Video

If you wish to submit a video to the DHHS YouTube Channel, send it on DVD along with a transcript to Video Library, Public Affairs, 2001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-2001. Please, no videos longer than 10 minutes. Videos will not be accepted without a transcript. Captioned videos (closed captioned or open captioned) are preferred. ■

## Plescia to lead CDC's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control

Dr. Marcus Plescia has been named director of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Ga.

Plescia has served as chief of the N.C. Chronic Disease and Injury Section in the Division of Public Health since 2003. He will begin his new job on July 6.

During Plescia's time at DHHS, North Carolina has increased its efforts and effectiveness, particularly in the areas of cancer screening,

tobacco cessation, obesity prevention and health disparities. Under his leadership, the CDI Section has also worked to integrate disease prevention efforts across a wide range of chronic diseases and conditions, in order to improve North Carolinians' health outcomes and decrease health disparities while making the best use of dwindling resources. Last year, North Carolina was one of four states chosen by CDC to participate in a three-year project to determine best management practices for chronic disease programs.

Plescia received his MD, MPH, and BS from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) and is an associate professor in UNC's Department of Family Medicine. He served as the president of the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors in 2008-09.

Dr. Ruth Petersen will serve as interim chief of the N.C. Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Section until a permanent replacement is named. ■

## Time to revisit resolutions to eat smart, move more

This month, declare your independence from unhealthy habits. Now is the perfect time to revisit your resolutions to eat smart, move more and achieve a healthy weight.

It's been six months since you set your resolutions for 2009. How have you kept your goals? If you've fallen off track, you're not alone – most people abandon their resolutions before March arrives. Now is the time to pick up where you left off or to make new mid-year resolutions.

Eat Smart, Move More NC is conducting the "Revisit Your Resolutions" campaign throughout the month of July. As part of the campaign, local health departments



and cooperative extension agents will help people to revisit their resolutions or to make new mid-year resolutions through the "Revisit Your Resolutions" campaign. Materials for the campaign can be downloaded at [www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com/News/News.html](http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com/News/News.html).

When revisiting your resolutions, or when making new ones, it is important

to keep in mind the foundation for SMART resolutions. They should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timely

When making resolutions, write down all the details – make them as specific as possible. Spell out a way to track your progress (for example how many minutes per day or days per week). Make your resolutions challenging, but doable. Then, set a date to have reached your goal! ■

## Two national awards recognize excellence in Oral Health

Nancy Ferguson Brown, registered dental hygienist in the Division of Public Health's Oral Health Section, is one of nine people in the nation to be awarded the Sunstar Americas and RDH Magazine 2009 Award of Distinction.

The award recognizes dental hygiene professionals who consistently go above and beyond typical dental hygiene practice. Only two other dental hygienists in North Carolina have ever received the award.

Ferguson Brown, who will be retiring in July after 30 years of dedicated service as a public health dental hygienist, provides education and preventive dental services to children in Burke County. A strong advocate for water fluoridation as a safe and effective community-based measure to prevent cavities, she recently directed her



Nancy Ferguson Brown

efforts to ensuring that the cities of Valdese and Morganton continued with their fluoridation programs.

On April 20, Dr. Irene Garbero, 2007-2008 dental public health resident in the Oral Health Section, was recognized by the American Association of Public Health Dentistry.

Garbero won third place for the 2009 Leverett Graduate Student Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dental Public Health. Working under the direction of section chief Dr. Rebecca King, Garbero had developed and tested a Spanish-language tool to better assess Latinos' perceptions of access to dental care.

Conducted in partnership with UNC School of Public Health, the 44-year-old residency program in the N.C. Oral Health Section is the only such program in the state and is for graduate students with a dental degree and a Master's in Public Health degree. One or two students are in the 12-month residency program each year. To date, 36 dentists have participated in the program, the goal of which is to produce graduates who effectively improve the oral health of the public. ■

## Public Health nutrition leaders recognized

Two nutrition professionals in the Division of Public Health have received national awards from the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND).

Nutrition Services Branch head Alice Lenihan received ASTPHND's 2009 Excellence in Practice Award in recognition of her leadership in public health nutrition, collaboration with allied health organizations, and the development of nutrition screening and education activities in the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Program. The Nutrition Services Branch is in the division's Women's and Children's Health Section.

ASTPHND also recognized nutrition manager Diane Beth, who is also N.C. Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Coordinator. Beth works in the Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch of the division's Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Section. Beth's 2009 award was for Outstanding Leadership for the National Council of Fruit & Vegetable Nutrition Coordinators. ■

## North Carolina's WISEWOMAN program receives National Award



NC WISEWOMAN™

WomenHeart, the national Coalition for Women with Heart Disease, has named North Carolina's WISEWOMAN program a recipient of the annual Wenger Award.

The award, named for Nanette Kass Wenger, a pioneer in women's cardiology, celebrates individuals and groups for making outstanding contributions to women's heart health.

"This year's honorees have been relentless in keeping women's health particularly women's heart health front and center in the debate on health care reform and we salute them and support their efforts", said Lisa M. Tate, CEO of WomenHeart. "Women can feel reassured that these dedicated souls are working hard and will continue to work to make a difference for the millions of women living with heart disease".

WISEWOMAN Program of North Carolina (Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation) is one of six programs recognized nationally. The WISEWOMAN program is being recognized for providing critical cardiovascular screenings and behavior change counseling to thousands of women at risk and in need. N.C. WISEWOMAN provides cardiovascular disease screenings to women enrolled in the N.C. Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program at 47 health departments and referral services, including A New Leaf...Choices for Healthy Living—a program that empowers women to make positive lifestyle changes.

"We are thrilled to accept this honor on behalf of the work that so many dedicated people are doing in North Carolina to provide life saving information to women and their families", said Linda Rascoe, director of the N.C. Cervical Cancer Control program. "It is evident that the work we are doing is making a difference when we're recognized at a national level as the recipient of the Community Education award."

N.C. WISEWOMAN is one of 21 programs in 20 states and tribal organizations funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to provide low-income, underinsured, or uninsured women ages 40-64 – with support and education to help them control or delay cardiovascular and other chronic diseases. ■

## New state vital records registrar appointed

Linda Brinkley has been appointed as the new Director of vital records and state registrar in the Division of Public Health (DPH). She began her new job June 29.

The North Carolina Vital Records Unit is responsible for registering all North Carolina births, deaths, fetal deaths, marriages, and divorces, coding the data for statistical research, maintaining the records, and providing certified or uncertified copies of the records upon request.

Brinkley previously worked in DPH, managing the development of the state's first lead poisoning prevention program. More recently, she spent almost 10 years at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of N.C. as manager of employer group utilization reporting and then as a program evaluation consultant. "Her experience in healthcare data analysis and reporting will be particularly valuable in her new position," said Deputy State Health Director Steve Cline.

Brinkley received her B.S. degree from UNC-Chapel Hill and MPH in Epidemiology from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.

Tom Reeher, who has served as Interim Director of Vital Records for the past 10 months, will return to his previous position in the DHHS Division of Information Management. ■

# Helping kids stay healthy, not hungry, during the summer

Secretary Lanier Cansler joined the children at the Healthy Habits Camp in Raleigh for breakfast on June 23. He was accompanied by Dr. Janey Thornton, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Deputy Under Secretary for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the bigger-than-life purple “Power Panther” mascot for the national *Eat Smart. Play Hard.* nutrition campaign.

Cansler and Thornton ate with the children at the Alice Aycock Poe Center for Health Education to celebrate the USDA’s Summer Food Service Program, or SFSP. Afterward, they visited the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina and the Boys and Girls Club of Raleigh.

The USDA program provides a breakfast, snack and lunch to children at participating facilities. It was created to ensure that children in lower-income areas could continue to receive nutritious meals during long school vacations, when they do not have access to school lunch or breakfast. Each year, more than 30 counties across North Carolina participate in the SFSP.

“The Summer Food Service Program is an important safety net program for low-income school age children in North Carolina,” said Cansler.



DHHS Secretary Cansler and the USDA's Power Panther enjoyed time with the kids at the Poe Center's Healthy Habits Camp breakfast.

“Children participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program count on the meals provided during the school year. But, these programs do not continue during the summer. Partnerships between the SFSP and agencies like the Poe Center for Health Education offer an excellent opportunity to incorporate education and experiences in building healthy habits early in life.”

For more information on the SFSP and a county-by-county list of summer feeding sites, see the Division of Public Health's Special Nutrition Programs Web site at [www.nutritionnc.com](http://www.nutritionnc.com) or call the N.C. CARE-LINE at 1-800-662-7030 (TTY: 1-877-452-2514). ■