

dhhs EmployeeUPDATE

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

Round two of DHHS Excels outreach sessions under way



Deputy Secretary for Long-Term Care and Family Services Maria Spaulding, left, and Special Projects Assistant to the Secretary Sandra Trivett present during a DHHS Excels outreach session held Oct. 31 on the Dix Campus in Raleigh.

– Photos by Jim Jones, DHHS Public Affairs

To deliver the message and goals of DHHS Excels, a second round of sessions is being held across DHHS to groups of approximately 50 employees each, beginning late last month in Greensboro, Asheville, Morganton and Raleigh.

Led by Deputy Secretary Maria Spaulding and Special Projects Assistant to the Secretary Sandra Trivett, the sessions have provided updated information on the status of the Excels initiative via a Power Point presentation, a packet of handouts,

and demonstrations of how to access Open Window and the Excels toolkit from the department web site.

At this fall’s meetings, Spaulding and Trivett are sharing information with participants about several

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process improvement efforts under way to increase effectiveness, reduce redundancy, improve customer service and enhance transparency and collaboration within the department.

Some of those initiatives are: streamlining the department's regulatory oversight functions; improving the contracting process; redesigning information and referral services in an existing call center in Martin County; developing a set of unified eligibility policies to greatly improve access to services; and ways to leverage and integrate resources, assets and opportunities in the delivery of community based services and supports.

After the presentations and a question and answer opportunity, participants are asked to discuss in small groups two specific questions and then answer individually and anonymously, in writing, to the presenters for their response. This created good opportunities for dialog during the sessions and also provides feedback that will be assimilated and shared with the Excels Steering Committee, Secretary Cansler and his Executive Management Team. Look for a summary of all sessions in a later edition of Update.

The remaining sessions are: November 9 in Charlotte, November 17 in Wilmington, and November 30 in Greenville. If you are interested in attending, please contact your supervisor or manager. ■

*– Sandra K. Trivett,
Special Projects Office*

DHHS Excels

Status report: Workforce Planning & Development

The Workforce Planning and Development Subcommittee of the Excels Steering Committee has analyzed demographic information from several databases as well as feedback from management in all DHHS divisions and offices that reflect concerns, needs, and priorities related to upgrading employee skills and improving the work environment throughout the Department.

With a goal of achieving results in the short term, the subcommittee has established four working groups that will be meeting over the next month to identify and begin implementation of actions that will result in some immediate

improvements. Below are examples of action items being discussed:

Team 1 – Job Design and related actions

- Clarifying the role of human resources (HR) within divisions as well as at the department level
- The benefits and impact on DHHS of Office of State Personnel's (OSP) planned rollout of an electronic job application system that will replace our current manual process
- Review of job description content, format and currency prior to posting

Team 2 – Knowledge Transfer

- Identifying and implementing various means of accomplishing knowledge transfer necessary due to anticipated retirements, transfers, promotions and other forms of employee attrition

Team 3 – Engagement and Retention

- Identifying and implementing "best practices" for exit and stay interviews designed to improve employee engagement and retention
- Identifying and utilizing flexible work options as appropriate

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Team 4 – Legislative and/or Policy Issues

■ Many identified workforce challenges are the result of policies or rules that are beyond the control of DHHS – for example, salary inequities, freeze release guidelines, employee recognition and rewards. Addressing these challenges will require advocacy and interaction with other state agencies, the General Assembly and others. Once these are fully identified, executive level decisions will need to be made on the best way to proceed.

Under the current projected schedule, implementation of these initiatives will begin late this year or early next year with the intention of having measurable improvement by the end of the current fiscal year.

If you have any comments regarding this work, you are encouraged to send an email to Sandra.Trivett@dhhs.nc.gov or feel free to speak to any member of the workforce committee led by Assistant Secretary for Finance and Business Operations Dan Stewart: Robbie Alford, Controller’s Office; Verna Best, director of Office of Economic

Opportunity; Julie Bloomingdale from DVRS; Deb Cassidy, director of Child Development; Kathy Gruer, director of DHHS HR; Jessica Herrmann, DMH/DD/SAS; Barb Kunz, DHHS HR; Laketha Miller, DHHS Controller; Tom Reeher, DIRM Financial Management; Bernetta Thorne-Williams, Division of Health Service Regulation; Joanne Toomey, assistant director, N.C. Council on Developmental Disabilities; Sandra Trivett, Special Projects; Don Webb, DHHS HR; and David Womble, director of Purchasing & Contracting. ■

– Tom Reeher, Division of Information Resource Management, Workforce Subcommittee communications

Bumblebees, kazoos and kids

The State Fair has witnessed many unusual events over its 158-year history, but one of the more unique was sponsored by the N.C. Division of Public Health’s Infant-Toddler Program (ITP) with what had to be the first-ever kid’s kazoo symphony and a retro sing-and-dance-along.

The N.C. Early Intervention ITP sponsored the original and classic song performance at the N.C. State Fair Waterfall Stage on Oct. 17.

The event was part of its *Be Early* public awareness campaign to encourage parents to educate themselves about what to expect to see as their children develop. ITP serves children from birth to age three who have developmental

disabilities or delays, and their families.

Kids received a free kazoo and were encouraged to take part in a kazoo rendition of Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Flight of the Bumblebee*. The concert also included updated versions of classic songs such as *The Ants Go Marching*, *Don’t Worry, Be Happy* and other kid’s songs.

The *Be Early* campaign also helped parents and caregivers to tune in to early intervention services offered through the ITP.

Events have been held or are scheduled in all of the Children’s Developmental Services Agencies



(CDSAs) that cover the state’s 100 counties. For more information about the ITP, developmental milestones and Be Early events across the state, visit www.beearly.nc.gov. ■

– Denise M’Bani, Early Intervention Branch, Division of Public Health

Awards recognize outstanding work in aging services

The Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) presented its annual awards for outstanding service on Oct. 18 at the North Carolina Conference on Aging, held in Charlotte.

These awards recognize individuals, organizations and programs that exhibit outstanding work with North Carolina's aging population, with issues related to aging and with the aging community around the state.

"We have an outstanding group of award winners this year," said Dennis Streets, DAAS director. "Collectively these groups touch the lives of many older adults and their families in the state. Once again we are privileged to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of those serving our residents with commitment, caring and concern."

The awards are named for three pioneers in the aging field in North Carolina:

The Messer Award recognizes a community that has excelled in addressing the needs of its older citizens. This year's recipient for the Messer Award is the Shepherd's Center of Kernersville.

For the past 26 years, this organization has been assessing and identifying the needs of its senior population, developing services to meet those needs, providing volunteer opportunities to seniors to enrich their lives, and advocating for seniors in their community. The center describes its mission as "An interfaith ministry of volunteers which champions and sustains older or disabled adults."

"The Shepherd's Center of Kernersville, has certainly fulfilled its mission by providing services to older adults through the help of its over 500 dedicated volunteers who last year gave 20,000 hours of their time," said Streets.

Services include transportation, respite, minor home repair, telephone reassurance, visitation, bereavement support, counseling and a full-time Senior Center of Excellence called the Senior Enrichment Center.

This award is named for Ernest B. Messer, a champion for aging in the General Assembly and a former assistant secretary for aging for the Department of Human Resources from 1981 to 1985.

Maddox Award: The Maddox Award recognizes an individual or organization that has excelled in creative programming for older adults. This year's Maddox Award is presented to the Wilson County Department of Social Services in recognition of Senior Awareness Day.

This initiative, started in 1994, is a one-day event held each year to educate older adults and disabled people about independent living, health and wellness. Senior Awareness Day has grown from an initial attendance of 125 participants to over 1,000 participants. Its budget has increased from \$800 to more than \$15,000, and its planning committee now consists of more than 66 community partners and 200 volunteers.

"As a result of Wilson County DSS's creative programming and the bond developed among its many partners, seniors and family caregivers in Wilson County are much better prepared to know where and how to seek information and assistance," Streets said.

The award is named for Dr. George L. Maddox, a noted gerontologist and director of Duke University's Long-Term Care Resource Program.

The Busse Award was established to recognize an individual or organization that has had a significant impact on enhancing the health status of older North Carolinians through efforts to direct health-related policies and/or to provide leadership in developing innovative solutions to health care problems. This year's award is presented to Teepa Snow, an occupational therapist who works as a dementia care and dementia education specialist.

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Aging awards cont. from page 4

Snow has 30 years of experience in geriatrics including serving as the education director and lead trainer for Alzheimer’s North Carolina, Inc. She has clinical appointments with Duke University’s School of Nursing and UNC-Chapel Hill’s School of Medicine, and she provides educational and training sessions to organizations and providers throughout the US. Snow has presented over 350 programs in the past year.

“Teepa’s leadership in the field of dementia has provided hope and reassurance to many persons with dementia and their family members across North Carolina,” Streets said.

The award is named for Dr. Ewald W. Busse, who was president emeritus of the N.C. Institute of Medicine and a founding director of the Duke University Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development.

For more information about aging issues in North Carolina go to www.ncdhhs.gov/aging. ■

– Lori Walston, DHHS Public Affairs

Psst! Want an iPad?

The State Employees Combined Campaign is offering a chance to win an iPad.

All DHHS employees who have submitted their paper or electronic pledge forms for the State Employees Combined Campaign by Nov. 10 will be eligible to have their name entered into a drawing that will take place in December at the conclusion of the campaign.

You can support causes you care about through the SECC. Even if you do not win the iPad, you will still be a winner in the eyes of those you help. ■



Soup at Broughton Building

Adult Care Licensure staff offered a soup buffet Oct. 31 as part of the section’s way of raising money for the State Employees’ Combined Campaign. Wanda A. Edwards, left, and Libby Kinsey wielded the ladles as they provided warm food on a cold day to anyone willing to offer \$5 toward the fund raiser.

– Photo by Jim Jones, DHHS Public Affairs

Senior Community Service Employment Program presents 2011 awards

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in the Division of Aging presented its annual awards at the state Conference on Aging, Oct. 18, in Charlotte. These awards recognize a program participant, an older worker and a participating employer for outstanding contributions to SCSEP.

Vickey Sykes who works with the Winston-Salem Urban League Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) at Gaston College in the Human Resources Development Program received the Mark M. Sabula Award.

The Sabula award recognizes the contributions of SCSEP participants for their dedicated efforts to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the workplace. This award is named in honor of Mark Sabula, a former DAAS Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) coordinator who passed away in 2002. Mark was a strong advocate for older workers and worked tirelessly to promote employment opportunities.

This year's recipient for the Ann B. Johnson Award is Sharon Steen who has worked as a receptionist for the Richmond County Employment Security Commission Office since 2006. Named for Johnson, a long-time activist and nationally recognized advocate for aging issues in North Carolina, the Johnson Award recognizes the contributions of older workers for their special qualities

and work ethic in the workplace. Johnson is over 90 years old and worked until she was 70.

This year's recipient of the Victor W. Marshall Award is the Carol Woods Retirement Community that has demonstrated excellence in the care and support of older adults for more than 30 years. The Marshall award recognizes an employer in the state that has excelled in recognizing the valuable contribution older workers make in the workforce. Marshall is a former director of the Institute on Aging at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill who developed an extensive research program on the aging of the labor force and led a research program examining large-scale survey data to investigate the changing retirement transition and its impact on health. ■

—Lori Walston,
DHHS Public Affairs



Sabula Award winner Vicky Sykes, left, is accompanied by Bob Harootyan, manager of research, Senior Service America, Inc.



Sharon Steen, right, winner of the Johnson Award, is accompanied by Jim Korth, special programs coordinator for the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina.

— Photos by Liz Needham,
Division of Aging and Adult Services

N.C. Medicaid among leaders in children's dental services

In just a decade, N.C. Medicaid has more than doubled the percentage of children receiving dental care, and now ranks among the top among state Medicaid programs for children's access to dental care.

An October report by the federal Medicaid agency found 47 percent of North Carolina's young Medicaid and N.C. Health Choice (NCHC) beneficiaries had received at least one dental service in 2009. That showing tied North Carolina for 9th place among all state Medicaid programs.

As an indicator of how far N.C. Medicaid has come, in 2000 only 22 percent of Medicaid children had received a dental service.

N.C. Medicaid's performance was even more dramatic by another measure – children receiving a preventive dental service such as regular cleaning or fluoridation. Of more than one million N.C. Medicaid/NCHC children in 2009, 44 percent had received a preventive service. That was nearly triple the 2000 rate of 15 percent, and good enough to move N.C. Medicaid into a tie for 6th place nationally.



Dr. Mark Casey, dental director for the Division of Medical Assistance (DMA), said the participation of dental providers has been critical to the turnaround. A decade ago, as many as 40 of North Carolina's 100 counties lacked a Medicaid-enrolled dentist. Now, only four counties lack a dentist who actively bills the program. Dentists' Medicaid participation rates in North Carolina over that span have risen from 16 percent to 45 percent. Around 2,100 of 4,500 licensed dental professionals in North Carolina now treat Medicaid patients.

Dr. Casey also cited oral health education and outreach efforts such as the Into the Mouths of Babes program, which DMA administers with the Division of Public Health to provide fluoride treatments to qualifying children ages 6 months to 3½ years. "Prior to that program's being established, in a third of the counties, a child that age would never have seen a dentist," he said. "We're now seeing an increase in access in all 100 counties."

Despite the improvements, much work remains. The access-to-care issues common throughout Medicaid seem to plague dentistry especially. "I think we can do a better job of getting the Medicaid population to establish a dental

home, just like we're encouraging people to have a medical home and make routine office visits," he said.

Those same issues affect the performance measures, as well. The annual report by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) takes into account all

children enrolled in Medicaid or NCHC during the year, even if they were on the program only a month. "I've argued the denominator used should be children enrolled six months continuously, or 11 of 12 months," Dr. Casey said. "Also, it should not include Medicaid

children under age 1 who do not have erupted teeth and thus have no reason for a dental visit."

Depending on the methodology, the percentage of N.C. Medicaid and NCHC children receiving services rises from 47 percent, as reported by the federal agency, to as high as 57 percent.

Still, Dr. Casey said, he's proud of what the DMA Dental Program has been able to accomplish – and continues to do so. "I have seen the preliminary numbers for SFY 2011, and we are still on the rise," he said.

– Brad Deen, DHHS Public Affairs

Fresh food drive highlights importance of local food to public health

A Fresh Food drive in Raleigh brought in more than a 1,000 pounds of fruit and vegetables Oct. 24 highlighting the importance of healthy eating.

State Health Director Jeffrey Engel joined middle school students from Wake County's Exploris Middle School to celebrate the health and economic benefits of fresh, local food. The fresh food drive in front of the N.C. Legislative Building was the highlight of a day-long "Game Changers" conference, where more than 100 representatives of community-based and state organizations met to discuss the transformation of the American diet to one based on locally-grown and minimally-processed foods. The conference was part of Food Day, a national event to encourage eating healthy, affordable food produced in a sustainable, humane way.

"This event is an opportunity to educate us all on the importance that our locally-grown food has on our physical and our economic health," said Dr. Engel. "North Carolinians suffer with chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity and cancers that we know can be prevented at least in part with better nutrition – meaning that we need to eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lowfat dairy and meat, eggs and seafood – much of which is produced right here in our state."

Seventy-two students from Exploris participated in the conference, sharing poster presentations and interactive games they created during a nine-week study of our food system. Students discussed their own efforts to eat more healthy, ranging from giving up soft drinks and junk food to foregoing seconds at the dinner table.

North Carolinians consistently fail to eat the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables, and over-eat fast food and sugary drinks. The result is poor health. North Carolina consistently ranks in the bottom third of all states when it comes to rates of chronic disease and obesity. This epidemic of poor nutrition begs for radical change – both in the types and amounts of foods that we eat.



Dr. Jeffrey Engel joins students from Exploris Middle School as they donate fresh fruits and vegetables during the Fresh Food Drive as part of national Food Day. The collection of 1,064 pounds of produce on Oct. 24 was the largest one day collection of fresh food by the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle to be distributed to families in the Triangle. – Photo by Julie Henry, DHHS Public Affairs

The N.C. Division of Public Health, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service, the Gillings School of Global Public Health at UNC-Chapel Hill, the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, the Center for Environmental Farming Systems and Sustainable Sandhills joined forces to sponsor the day's events, which included national and community-level speakers, a Farmers Market on the Mall and the "fresh" Food Drive of fruits and vegetables, all of which will be distributed by the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle to families in the Triangle area.

For more information about Food Day, visit www.foodday.org. ■

– Julie Henry, DHHS Public Affairs

E-Recruit to launch next month

The Office of State Personnel announced in October that E-Recruit is targeted for launch in state agencies by mid-December.

E-Recruit is a web-based technology solution that will automate and streamline the State's employment application process. E-Recruit allows applicants to apply for jobs online by completing a state application for a specific job announcement. Employment applications will be received in a local DHHS human resources office, forwarded by e-mail to the hiring manager for review, and returned to human resources, all via the Internet.

The Office of State Personnel and the E-Recruit vendor, NEOGOV, will conduct train-the-trainer sessions for cabinet agency human resources employees through mid-November. DHHS Human Resources will continue training of division human resources staff throughout November into early next month. A "just-in-time" online tutorial will be available for hiring managers to learn how to use E-Recruit as it pertains to receiving, reviewing and returning the applicant package to human resources. The tutorial

will take about 30 minutes. Human resources staff will also be available to hiring supervisors for support and consultation on how to use E-Recruit.



The NEOGOV E-Recruit solution is currently used in 17 states and 400 local governments. The states of Washington, South Carolina and the Town of Cary use NEOGOV if you would like to check out a few E-Recruit sites.

Your local human resources office will keep you apprised as more is learned about the E-Recruit system and/or if the launch date is changed. ■

– Andrea Clinkscales,
DHHS Human Resources

South Mountain Craft Show



Kathy M. Finley adjusts displays of jewelry on Oct. 31 as the pre-holiday sale of South Mountain Crafts from the J. Iverson Riddle Development Center in Morganton got under way. The sale this year is at the meeting room of the Grill on the Hill at Dix. The meeting room was transformed to a shop packed with pottery, wood and wreaths, jewelry, pillows, ornaments and other crafts. The sale ends Nov. 3 at 3 p.m.

– Photo by Jim Jones, DHHS Public Affairs

November is Adoption Month in NC

NC Heart Gallery is a photography portrait exhibit that raises awareness about North Carolina's children available for adoption.

The Heart Gallery will be exhibited in several churches and at adoption events during the month of November. If you know of a business or organization that is interested in hosting a Heart Gallery, please contact NC Kids.



To learn more about adopting children from foster care or other waiting children, please call NC Kids at **877-625-4371** or visit www.adoptnckids.org.



Public Health Fall Festival

The Division of Public Health held its annual Fall Festival on the Six Forks campus on Oct. 31, a highlight of which each year is the costume contest. Rocky Payne and Karen Stanley from the Physical Activity & Nutrition Branch entertained the crowd with a rousing reminder to eat more fruits and veggies.

– Photo by Julie Henry, DHHS Public Affairs

Maintain, don't gain this holiday season

Resolve to stuff the turkey, not yourself this holiday season by avoiding the perennial holiday weight gain. Many North Carolinians gain from one to five pounds each holiday season. While it may not sound like much, most people never manage to lose these extra pounds.

All North Carolinians are invited to join the sixth annual *Eat Smart, Move More...Maintain, don't gain! Holiday Challenge*. Rather than focusing on trying to lose weight, this free six-week challenge provides participants with tips, tricks and ideas to help maintain your weight throughout the holiday season. The challenge will begin Nov. 21 and run through Dec. 31.

How to join:

- Sign-up at www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com.
- Click on the Holiday Challenge then click 'Join Now' and enter your email address.
- All participant information is kept confidential.

Once you join you will receive:

- A calorie counter, a food log and an activity log to track your progress.
- A chance to receive bonus healthy holiday recipes and a shopping list if you sign up early and complete the pre-survey.

- Six free weekly emailed newsletters with tips to
 - Manage holiday stress
 - Fit physical activity into your day
 - Cook quick and healthy meals

In 2010, more than 4,900 people from 99 North Carolina counties and 40 other states took part in the challenge. At the end of the program, 80 percent reported maintaining their weight.

The *Eat Smart, Move More...Maintain, don't gain! Holiday Challenge* is a part of the Eat Smart, Move More NC movement to increase healthy eating and physical activity opportunities wherever North Carolinians live, learn, earn, play and pray. Find out more at www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com.

– Julie Henry, DHHS Public Affairs

Avoid Holiday Weight Gain this year!



Join the Holiday Challenge at
www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com.

Participation is FREE

November 21 through December 31

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