



# Tennessee Public Health Association Newsletter

[www.TNpublichealth.org](http://www.TNpublichealth.org)



*Paula Masters  
President, 2013-2014*

## *Message from the President*

### **No missed opportunities!**

As I sit here in this New Year, looking out at new fallen snow, and with the coo of my new little one in the background I begin to allow my mind to wander into what other new things will I be afforded in 2014. As public health workers we are faced everyday with unique challenges. Some we are prepared for and have all the necessary resources needed to tackle it and win. Others we cannot possibly prepare for and leave us feeling helpless. I feel that it is in these times when we should look at the situation as an opportunity for us to stretch and grow. We just buckle down and tell ourselves that even though we may not have been prepared or we don't have what we need in that moment, we will still succeed and not allow it to become a missed opportunity. My New Year's reSOLUTION is to not allow for any missed opportunities. There are areas for learning and strength building in everything we face, especially in public health.

As I am sure you have learned, Tennessee received a low America's Health Ranking this year by the United Health Foundation. The overall rank was 42 out of 50 states for 2013. Many are disheartened by this rank choosing to see improvement as something that cannot be accomplished or a faint light in the distant future. I do not agree with this belief. As public health infrastructure and capacity are measured, Tennessee is currently experiencing strength and growth in both. We have a passionate and committed Commissioner of Health, quality improvement efforts throughout public health in Tennessee, and private and public health organizations and practitioners working together toward the betterment of the state. These align with an already strong, focused, and competent public health workforce whose primary motivation is the best health outcome for its citizens. With all these pieces in place, Tennessee is ready for the challenge. While the rank is low, it should merely serve as a goal to overcome, not a mark that defines us. We are aligned to move forward and have already begun. This is a perfect example of an opportunity for Tennessee public health to flex its muscles and improve in the areas necessary, but also capitalize on its strengths to accomplish goals.

TPHA is part of that strong foundation of public health infrastructure in our great state. The association provides resources, training, and a network to continue to build and strengthen efforts statewide to improve health. One of the offerings of the association is three regional educational conferences to provide opportunities for learning and idea sharing of the public health community. These conferences are a wonderful opportunity to come together and learn where we as public health professionals can focus our efforts, be given best practices, and locate resources to put toward our existing activities. They also provide rich conversation with peers. These all occur in the spring and the dates and locations can be found on the TPHA website. Do not miss this opportunity!

Just as I did with my first Presidential message, I would like to leave you with a poem. Well, this time it is a section of a poem by Juneil Sechico. This is how WE move forward. We do not allow for missed opportunities; we approach all things together in public health. And this is where we find our strength....from within.

### **Camaraderie By: Juneil Sechico**

We can make history,  
Explore the world beyond boundary,  
We can soar the unlimited sky;  
Spread our wings and fly.

Different interests, yet aiming for one;  
Glow like silver brighter than the sun,  
Mark the time with blazing hearts,  
Help the ruins to make a brand new start.

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## Program Committee Report

*Submitted by: Matt McDaniel, Chair, Program Committee*

### 2014 Annual Educational Conference

The Program Committee met this past December, and we are excited to announce the theme for 2014's Annual Educational Conference (drum roll please): "Health & Home: Where You Live Matters". This theme allows us to touch on many facets of public health, as we can discuss matters ranging from county health rankings to community resiliency within the umbrella of our theme. We are also excited in that this theme runs parallel to the 2014 APHA Annual Meeting's theme of "Healthography: How where you live affects your health and well-being".

We already have a great lineup of workshop speakers confirmed, including:

Dr. David Mirvis of UTHSC on the "Three Tennessees"

Ms. Diana Yassanye on the CDC's social media outreach and "Operation Dragonfire"

Dr. Carol Myers of UTK with updates on the ACA and its effects within TN

Dr. Paul Erwin on Evidence-Based Public Health and how it betters public health practice

That's just a handful of the great workshops we have lined up for the conference! Also, we have reviewed the surveys submitted after the conference and we are working to make sure we take your suggestions into account as we build our program schedule. Our committee wants to make sure that our members have the most productive, educational, and entertaining conference that they can get, so we're making sure the conference includes:

An early-evening workshop session on Thursday

More evenly-spaced breaks, for an atmosphere conducive to networking, silent auction bidding, or just a chance to sit back and absorb the workshops

Workshops on Friday timed to make for an easier hotel checkout

Of course, we'll be keeping the popular program items on the schedule, so watch this space in each newsletter to keep abreast of the excitement as we build towards fun times in Franklin!

### Dr. Ali Khan to deliver Thursday's Plenary Address

The Program Committee is pleased to announce that on Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, our conference's Plenary Speaker will be U.S. Assistant Surgeon General, Ali S. Khan (RET), MD, MPH, the Director of the CDC's Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response.

Dr. Khan began leading CDC's Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response in August 2010. Most recently he was the Deputy Director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID) at CDC. Dr. Khan is an Assistant Surgeon General and joined CDC and the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps in 1991 as an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officer. Over the past decade, he has responded to and led numerous high profile domestic and international public health emergencies including hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, Ebola hemorrhagic fever, monkeypox, Rift Valley fever, avian influenza, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), the Asian Tsunami, and the initial public health response to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

Dr. Khan's professional career has focused on bioterrorism, global health, and emerging infectious diseases. He served as one of the main architects of CDC's public health bioterrorism preparedness program which upgraded local, state, and national public health systems to detect and rapidly respond to bioterrorism. He designed CDC's joint global field epidemiology and laboratory training program. Dr. Khan was an integral part of the design and implementation of the President's Malaria Initiative and has been engaged in guinea worm and polio eradication. He also



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proposed BioPHusion as a new public health initiative to improve knowledge exchange for all public health practitioners.

Dr. Khan received his MD from Downstate Medical Center in his hometown of Brooklyn, NY, and completed a joint residency in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor before joining CDC. He has a Masters of Public Health from Emory University where he is an adjunct professor. He has over 150 peer-reviewed publications, textbook chapters, editorials, and brief communiqués. He has consulted intensively for multiple U.S. organizations including NASA, Ministries of Health, and the World Health Organization.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Scholarship Committee

*Submitted by Kevin Morris, Chair*

- Do you have at least 3 years public health experience, and
- Have you been a member of TPHA for minimum of 1 year?
- Would you like to have some financial assistance with your education endeavors?

Then look no further than your Tennessee Public Health Association. The association raised over \$5,100 through the 2013 Silent Auction to help provide scholarships to its members. If you are interested in applying, you may download an application from the TPHA website [www.tnpublichealth.org](http://www.tnpublichealth.org).

Scholarships shall be awarded to advance individual knowledge and competence in Public Health.

Awards for Public Health training shall be limited to programs which award college credit, continuing education units (CEU's), or certification through a nationally recognized accrediting body or educational institution. The deadline to submit an application is June 30!

If you have any questions, please contact Kevin Morris at [kevin.morris@tn.gov](mailto:kevin.morris@tn.gov).

### Award Nominations Sought

*Submitted by: Gail Harmon, Chair*

#### Award Nominations

The Awards Committee is actively accepting nominations for the following awards through June 30, 2014:

- R.H. Hutcheson, Sr., MD, Award
- Alex B. Shipley, MD, Award
- Public Health Worker of the Year Award
- Public Health Group/Unit/Department Award
- Partners and Leadership (PAL) Award

This is excellent opportunity to honor and recognize staff that is so well-deserving. For more specific information on award criteria and forms, visit the TPHA website, [www.tnpublichealth.org](http://www.tnpublichealth.org).

## National Public Health Week 2013

*Submitted by: Shannon Railling, Chair, Public Health Week Committee*

National Public Health Week 2014 is almost here! The theme is "Public Health: Start Here" and we hope to have an extraordinary celebration this year! We will have daily focus areas including nutrition, emergency preparedness, disease prevention, maternal health, and being the Healthiest Nation in One Generation!

We will also be honoring local public health dreamers and doers with the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Health Visionary Awards! Be on the lookout for the nomination forms at your local health department or from your region or metro's Public Health Week Committee Member, or email [srailling@k12tn.net](mailto:srailling@k12tn.net). **Deadline for nominations is 3:00 PM Central on March 19, 2014.** Each year this award recognizes those in our communities who devote their time, energy, and heart into creating healthier communities. I know there are amazing visionaries in every community across our state, so nominate them this year!

New this year, and super exciting, is a partnership with our student section and universities...Announcing the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Student Video Challenge. Students will create and submit videos based on the annual Public Health Week theme. Videos will be posted to our Facebook page and a winner will be chosen by the committee for the grand prize and recognition at their regional TPHA meeting.

As always, Public Health Week is a time to recognize our local public health heroes, YOU! Thank you to each of you for the daily work you do to improve the health of Tennesseans. You are Public Health at its best!

## Call for Posters

Submitted by Dr. Paul Petersen, Chair, Poster Session Committee

Submissions due by:

***June 27, 2014***

The Tennessee Public Health Association is currently accepting abstracts for poster presentations at the 2014 TPHA Annual Educational Conference, September 10-12 at the Cool Springs Conference Center in Franklin, Tennessee. We encourage abstracts in all areas of public health from all public health disciplines, including colleges and universities.

Abstracts on all topics related to public health in Tennessee are welcome. You do need to be a TPHA member to submit an abstract. If your poster is accepted for display, you may be asked to present at one of the workshops this year. You will need to register for the conference and plan to attend.

Abstracts must be typed and submitted in electronic format (Microsoft Word). Use 12-point font, double-spacing, and complete in 250 words or less. The word count excludes the title, authors, affiliations, and contact information. The abstract submission form can be found on the TPHA website ([www.tnpublichealth.org](http://www.tnpublichealth.org)).

Please email **Committee Chair, Paul Petersen** at [paul.petersen@tn.gov](mailto:paul.petersen@tn.gov) with questions.

## Reserve Your Room Today at the Cool Springs Marriott

Simply cut and paste the link below and you will be directed to the property's home page with the code already entered in the appropriate field. Enter your arrival date to begin the reservation process.

[http://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkData=TN%20Public%20Health%20Assn%5EBNACS%60PHAPHAA%60132.00%60USD%60false%609/9/14%609/12/14%608/18/14&app=resvlink&stop\\_mobi=yes](http://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkData=TN%20Public%20Health%20Assn%5EBNACS%60PHAPHAA%60132.00%60USD%60false%609/9/14%609/12/14%608/18/14&app=resvlink&stop_mobi=yes)

You may also go online to the TPHA website and click "Annual Meeting" and then "Hotel Information."

## FOCUS ON PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

### FOUR REGIONS RECOGNIZED BY NACCHO

Submitted by: Karen Lynn, Upper Cumberland Region

After over a year of work by the respective Public Health Emergency Preparedness teams, two rural regions and two metro health department regions in Tennessee have been recognized by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) for their ability to plan for, respond to and recover from public health emergencies. The East and Upper Cumberland regional health offices, along with the Jackson-Madison County and Sullivan County Health Department Regions, earned the recognition. They are four of only thirteen agencies from Florida and Tennessee who achieved recognition this year.

All demonstrated capabilities to meet comprehensive preparedness benchmarks required by Project Public Health Ready (PPHR), a unique partnership between NACCHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The four Tennessee health programs join an elite group; less than 400 local health departments from 2,800 across the country have been distinguished for excellence in preparedness through PPHR, either individually or as part of a region.

"All disasters strike locally, and local health departments are a critical part of any community's first response to disease outbreaks, emergencies, and acts of terrorism," said Robert Pestronk, NACCHO Executive Director. "NACCHO commends these Tennessee programs for being models of public health emergency preparedness."

NACCHO, the voice of the 2,800 local health departments across the country, provides resources to help local health department leaders develop public health policies and programs to ensure communities have access to vital programs and services people need to keep them protected from disease and disaster. Its mission is to be a leader, partner, catalyst and voice for local health departments to ensure the conditions that promote health and equity, combat disease, and improve the quality and length of all lives.

The four agencies will be recognized at the 2014 Preparedness Summit in Atlanta, Georgia in April. TPHA would like to congratulate these health departments for their effort and dedication to this project and to improving preparedness in their regions.

For more information on Project Public Health Ready, including recognized sites, project tools, and resources, visit <http://www.naccho.org/PPHR>.

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### TDH Partners with Hospitals to Provide Safe Sleep Education to Parents

Submitted by: Rachel Heitmann, TDH, Injury Prevention and Detection Director

Every parent loves the sight of their baby sleeping peacefully. Unfortunately, many Tennessee infants' lives are cut short each year because they are not put to sleep safely. In 2012, 121 infants died in an unsafe sleep environment. The Tennessee Department of Health is partnering with the Charlie's Kids Foundation and Tennessee hospitals to provide teaching materials to help new parents and hospital staff members learn the "ABCs of safe sleep." TDH will provide hospitals that develop and implement a safe sleep policy with copies of the *Sleep Baby Safe and Snug* board book for each baby born in their facility in 2014. Participating hospitals are required to provide annual education to all perinatal staff, provide education to new mothers and model safe sleep behavior in the hospital. Seventy-one hospitals in Tennessee, including 100% of birthing hospitals have signed up to participate in the project.

Charlie's Kids Foundation was established in 2011 after Sam and Maura Hanke lost their first son, Charlie, to sudden infant death syndrome. Sam Hanke, a pediatric cardiologist, and Maura Hanke, a kindergarten teacher, have made it their mission to teach others that a baby is safest alone on his or her back in a crib for sleeping. Charlie's Kids was founded with the purpose of increasing safe sleep awareness and education with the ultimate goal of reducing the SIDS mortality rate.

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Hospitals that have partnered with TDH in this project will also receive flip charts and other educational materials staff members can use to teach new parents about safe sleep for infants. TDH launched a statewide campaign in June 2012 to increase awareness of safe sleep practices in order to reduce infant mortality in Tennessee. The primary message for parents and others who care for infants is to “**Remember the ABCs of Safe Sleep.**” There are three critical measures to follow when it’s time for an infant to sleep. “**A**” is for **Alone**: always let the baby sleep alone, never in a bed with another person where the baby could be smothered. “**B**” is for on the baby’s **Back**; an infant should be placed to sleep on his or her back, not on his or her side or stomach. “**C**” is for **Crib**: always put your child to sleep in a crib with only a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet.

Along with TDH and Charlie’s Kids, partners in this project include the Tennessee Hospital Association, the Children’s Hospital Alliance of Tennessee, the Hospital Alliance of Tennessee, and the Tennessee Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. A list of participating hospitals is available online at [http://safesleep.tn.gov/PDFs/Hospital\\_Partner\\_List.pdf](http://safesleep.tn.gov/PDFs/Hospital_Partner_List.pdf).

Safe sleep educational materials are available free of charge to local health departments and other agencies interested in educating caregivers about safe sleep. For information on ordering materials and additional information about the ABCs of safe sleep go to <http://safesleep.tn.gov>.

## TDH LAUNCHES NEW STATEWIDE BREASTFEEDING HOTLINE



Tennessee families now have a new resource to support their efforts to breastfeed babies. The Department of Health has launched the statewide Tennessee Breastfeeding Hotline, which is now available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The toll-free number is **1-855-4BF-MOMS** (1-855-423-6667). The hotline is staffed by International Board Certified Lactation Consultants and Certified Lactation Counselors, and operated in partnership with LeBonheur Community Health and Well-Being.

Tennessee Breastfeeding Hotline staff members are available to assist nursing mothers and partners, their families, expectant mothers and health care providers seeking breastfeeding support and information. The hotline provides accurate and up-to-date information to address common questions and concerns about breastfeeding, including but not limited to:

- Is baby getting enough milk?
- Baby refuses to nurse
- Coping with breast or nipple pain
- Using breast pumps

The Tennessee Breastfeeding Hotline is available for breastfeeding mothers and their circle of support such as a family member, partner or health care provider at any time of day, and will help sustain the length of time for breastfeeding. The hotline offers referral services to the Tennessee Women, Infants and Children Program, breast pump rentals and local community support groups.

For more information please visit our Tennessee Department of Health Breastfeeding website: <http://breastfeeding.tn.gov/> .

## REGIONAL REPORTS

### EAST REGION RECOGNIZED AS PROJECT PUBLIC HEALTH READY (PPHR) BY NACCHO

Submitted by: Jack Cochran

The East Tennessee Region proudly announces selection as one of only 13 agencies nationwide to receive recognition for our ability to plan for, respond to and recover from public health emergencies by the National Association of County and City Health Officials. This recognition is done through a criteria-based public health preparedness program called Project Public Health Ready (PPHR).

The PPHR assesses criteria that are nationally recognized standards for local public health preparedness. This set of criteria is often reviewed to ensure alignment with recent federal initiatives, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Public Health Emergency Preparedness (CDC PHEP) capabilities and Public Health Accreditation Board's Standards and Measures. Each of the three PPHR project goals—all-hazards preparedness planning, workforce capacity development and demonstration of readiness through exercises or real events—has a comprehensive list of standards that agencies must meet to achieve PPHR recognition. There are collectively over 236 complex measures included in those standards that must be fully addressed to receive credit for that standard.

To receive this recognition, the ETRO Emergency Preparedness Department used every available moment for 13 months to review, revise, and expand upon current plans, roles and policies. Everything we currently used was re-assessed looking at the big picture of Emergency Preparedness the PPHR required. At the beginning of 2012, the ETRO Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) contained a basic plan with annexes A through H. At the end of 2013, the ETRO EOP contained an expanded basic plan containing annexes A through Y totaling 5,242 pages. It was a grueling, but important opportunity to examine every sentence of every plan and provide expansion with the guidance of the PPHR measures as needed and add areas where needed. The East Tennessee region received recognition by meeting 100% of the extensive criteria measures.

During this time, East Region EP staff spent 28 days operating a fully activated Regional Health Operations Center (RHOC) throughout the Fungal Meningitis Outbreak. A previously scheduled full scale Point of Dispensing (POD) exercise was also conducted in Sevier County in March, 2013, which required several months of planning. Both these events remained within the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) requirements with all required documentation done as well.

The East Tennessee Region is proud to be selected as a recipient of this distinguished national recognition. Not only does it represent acknowledgement for many hours of hard, intense work, but it also provides our region with a stronger emergency preparedness program that will benefit everybody.

For more information on Project Public Health Ready, including recognized sites, visit [www.naccho.org/PPHR](http://www.naccho.org/PPHR)

### KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT PARTNERS WITH COMMUNITY TO PROMOTE WALKABILITY

Submitted by Sarah Griswold, MS-MPH, RD, LDN, Nutritionist, KCHD

Last month several Knox County Health Department (KCHD) employees celebrated the construction of a missing part of sidewalk in front of our building. For some this is just a small bit of construction, but for many of us who work to improve conditions for pedestrians in our region this is definitely a huge step in the right direction. This construction improves the access for many of our clients, co-workers, and neighbors who use walking as a mode of transportation, workout, or a simple, quiet walk during lunchtime.

KCHD has partnered with community efforts to increase walkability for many years. One example is our work with Safe Routes to School. We have facilitated the Safe Routes to School Partnership in Knox County since its inception in 2010. The partnership is currently working in some capacity with all 83 schools in the Knox County system. Specific Project Diabetes grant funding is being used to implement programs in four underserved neighborhood schools including Belle Morris Elementary, Green Magnet Elementary, Whittle Springs Middle, and Vine Middle Magnet Schools. KCHD staff work closely with school



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The signature pads created problems due to the USB recognizing as a human interface device (HID) and he realized that we needed serial interface pads. The card swipes were set up as HID devices but required changing the configuration to keyboard emulation. Printing from AxiUm was another hurdle because original guidance was to only install the remote desktop to allow connection to their server, but we had to install the full client version of AxiUm for the ability to print. He struggled with many trials and tribulations to successfully complete this task.

Matt has developed a great working relationship with Meharry and has worked with them to help solve problems that have included firewall and other security issues. He solved the problems with the virtual environment timing out before the documentation could even be completed. He has also worked through issues with the next environment using Citrix. This new environment will increase the speed of software for the users. The previous environment was extremely slow and the Citrix environment has shown significant speed improvements.

Students began serving their rotations on September 3 with eight students completing rotations to date. The documentation of procedures and scoring of the students is recorded into the Meharry database thanks to Matt's accomplishments with this project. Matt has worked diligently to accomplish this task. He stepped up to the plate and is recognized for his excellent work in making this project a huge success!

## SHELBY COUNTY

### Shelby County Health Department Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program

Submitted by: Heather Burton, Shelby County Health Department

#### Point of Dispensing (POD) Exercise Held

On Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, a walk-thru Flu Point of Dispensing (POD) exercise was held at Christ Church Bartlett in Bartlett, Tennessee. The Shelby County Health Department Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program (PHEPP), along with numerous Health Department staff and administration, public health nurses and Medical Reserve Corp volunteers, set up a clinic in the sanctuary of the church and welcomed over 600 residents in four hours, all receiving a free seasonal flu vaccination. This exercise is an annual event designed to test our ability to mass vaccinate the public should a threat or disaster require prophylaxis to a large section of the public to prevent the spread of illness or disease. Valuable support was also provided by the PHEPP staff of the West Tennessee Regional Health Department, the Bartlett Police Department and the Bartlett Fire Department.



#### Unique Door to Door Exercise Held



On Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup> the Shelby County Health Department Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program (PHEPP) hand delivered bags containing empty pill bottles to nearly 2,800 residents in the Collierville and Germantown communities. Each bag was distributed to simulate the delivery of medications door to door should a disaster or other public health event require the prophylaxis of a specific area of the community that are unable to travel to a drive-thru or walk-thru Point of Dispensing site. Volunteer support for this exercise was made possible through the Medical Reserve Corps, Houston High School HOSA, Covington High School HOSA, the Arkansas Department of Health staff, and the Tennessee Department of Health staff. Additional planning and safety support was provided by the Germantown Police and Fire Departments and the Collierville Police and Fire Departments.

## Welcome Baby Project

A Family Health and Wellness and TENNderCare Program Collaborative  
Submitted by: Howard Richardson, Jr., Memphis Shelby Region Program Director

The Welcome Baby Project is a new addition (effective July 1, 2013) to the Shelby County Health Department TENNderCare Outreach Program.

Starting with babies born in October 2013, all new Tennessee parents will receive a Welcome Baby packet within a few weeks of the baby's birth. The packet will contain a letter of congratulations from (Governor) First Lady Crissy Haslam, information on the new kid central TN website, sign-up material for their local Imagination Library chapter and more. Each family appearing on the "Level 3 High Risk" list will also receive a follow up visit from one of our Community Health Workers (CHWs). Topics covered during the home visit may include: importance of well child checks and ongoing developmental screening, breastfeeding, and safe sleep. Sharing of formal resources may include Welcome Baby Roadmap, Parent Resource Telephone Line, Books for Babies Enrollment Information, and Home Visiting Program(s) in community. Other Resources may include Help Us Grow Successfully, Women Infants and Children and Children's Special Services.

The purpose of the Welcome Baby Project is to screen for family and child risks at the time of a child's birth, provide timely referrals to address their needs, connect children and families with appropriate services in the community and to improve utilization of community resources. Although the home visiting and early childhood programs will also receive and accept referrals independent from the centralized referral system, the approach being taken is based on the belief that a one on one contact and in-person contact with families is critical to assuring families just don't land in a home visiting program but are linked to the right program that meets their needs.

The Welcome Baby Project is an evidence based home visitation program aimed at the mother/newborn of families identified as "Level 3 High Risk" as it relates to infant mortality (two home visits will be conducted per high risk birth: 4-6 weeks after birth and 9-12 months of age). The Welcome Baby visits are not cold call visits but scheduled and more inclusive than usual.

The Welcome Baby Project is an initiative that is the next step in our efforts to reduce infant mortality rates and improve early childhood success in Tennessee by helping equip families with the knowledge and skills needed to raise happy and healthy children.

## SALMONELLA INVESTIGATION IN THE SOUTHEAST REGION

Submitted by: **Beth Delaney**

An investigation of a food-borne outbreak at the Bradley County Justice Center led to Tyson Foods, Inc. recalling 33,840 pounds of chicken products which may be contaminated with Salmonella Heidelberg. Several staff members at the Southeast Regional Health Office were involved in the investigation. On the Friday after Thanksgiving, three inmates were transported to SkyRidge Medical Center with high fever, diarrhea, and/or vomiting. Debbie Walker, Communicable and Environmental Disease Director, worked over the holiday weekend to gather information from the hospital and the jail. Newly symptomatic inmates were seen by the Justice Center Medical staff and quarantined to one POD. Debbie worked with Dr. Allyson Cornell, Medical Director and the Infection Control Nurse at SkyRidge to evaluate the situation. Debbie shared her findings with the Communicable Environmental Disease staff on the following Monday.

Amanda Taylor, Epidemiologist, developed a questionnaire to interview inmates who were ill. Eric Coffey, Environmental Health Director, collected food samples from a tray and shipped them overnight to the state lab. Those food samples were negative on the initial screen. At that time, everyone who was sick was an inmate. Amanda contacted Aramark, the food service provider for the center, and developed a food history including all menu items served for one week before the first day of reported illness.

Amanda's questionnaire was approved by Central Office staff and inmate interviews began. As more inmates became symptomatic, Amanda; Deb Solomon, Nurse Consultant; Robin Moore, Immunization Nurse; Marsha Rogers, Nurse Consultant; Melanie Grant, Administrative Assistant; and Christina Arriaga, Interpreter helped conduct interviews. One of the inmates had been transferred to the Bledsoe County Prison so Jamie James, an Infection Control Nurse in Bledsoe County interviewed that inmate.



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Southeast Regional staff went to the Justice Center and met with administration to discuss prevention methods, infection control, media inquiries, and the importance of timely communication. This meeting helped build a good relationship with the Center and led to better coordination throughout the rest of the investigation. Eric Coffey conducted an assessment of the center's kitchen and found no issues or concerns.

Rendi Murphree, Ellyn Marder, and Marie Bottomley from Central Office assisted in developing a database and data analysis dashboard for the investigation. Amanda matched cases to controls and completed data entry for the questionnaires. She also requested stool samples on all ill inmates from the Justice Center nursing supervisor. Data analysis revealed that November 27 was the likely date of exposure and the pathogen was detected as Salmonella. Mechanically separated chicken served on that date for breakfast and lunch was investigated further and the distributor and manufacturer were identified.

Deb Solomon and Marsha Rogers provided education to the Justice Center staff, both medical and non-medical, on preventing disease transmission, hand washing techniques, and infection control. They also met with lab personnel at SkyRidge Medical Center to discuss obtaining stool specimens from the hospitalized inmates.

Throughout the investigation, Central Office staff including Katie Garman, Amanda Ingram, and Dr. John Dunn arranged several meetings with Southeast Regional staff. They reviewed findings and provided guidance on the correct course of action.

The investigation led to the Tennessee Department of Health Central Office and Southeast Regional Office staff working with FSIS/USDA to recall the mechanically separated chicken associated with the Justice Center. Based on the investigation, Tyson Foods, Inc. recalled approximately 33,840 pounds of mechanically separated chicken products that were shipped nationally for institutional use only. This team effort leading to a recall may prevent individuals nationwide from developing Salmonella which will protect health and save money.

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## **UPPER CUMBERLAND REGION**

**Submitted by: Karen Lynn, Emergency Response Coordinator**

The Upper Cumberland Region Emergency Preparedness Program staff has been very busy in the past few months. First of all, the team learned in January that the program will be recognized as Project Public Health Ready (PPHR) by NACCHO. This recognition was the culmination of over a year of work improving the regions All Hazards preparedness plan. The project lead was Karen Lynn, Emergency Response Coordinator. The other team members were Dawn Hickey, MRC Coordinator, Michelle Zachary, EP Nurse, Kristi Langford, Regional Hospital Coordinator, Lora Hoover, Secretary and Barry Weber, NTS. The region will receive a plaque at the NACCHO Preparedness Summit in Atlanta in February.

The region's Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) unit, led by unit coordinator Dawn Hickey, has also been working hard. The national MRC program tracks activities reported from across the nation and highlights the "top 20" MRC units for their commitment to their communities and their willingness to share success with the MRC network. The Upper Cumberland unit was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for the reporting period FY 2013! In addition, the unit received notification that they were approved to receive the NACCHO Capacity Building Award for 2013-2014. This is the seventh consecutive year the unit has been approved for this award. The funding is used to support the training, exercising and response of the MRC unit. Lastly, the Emergency Preparedness team has focused on recruitment and retention in the past few months and has increased the number of volunteers to 3154.

In September of 2013, the region held a drive-through Point of Dispensing (POD) exercise as part of the annual training and exercise program. Over 300 people participated, including 90 MRC volunteers, state and regional emergency preparedness program staff, public health staff, and numerous response partners from White County including EMA, EMS, city police, 911, rescue and fire departments, hospital, and even the Tennessee Highway Patrol. The exercise was a success and proved to be a good test of our drive-through POD planning, not only for White County, but also for our other sites.

## WEST TN

### Hardin County is Navigating Good Health in 2014!

*Submitted by Beth Hamilton, Public Health Educator II, McNairy and Hardin Counties West TN Region*



*Pictured Left to Right: Beth Hamilton, Mary Harris, Pattie Kiddy, Michelle Reynolds, Holly Broughton, Sondra Apple, and Nancy Austin.*

Residents of Hardin County, located in West Tennessee on the banks of the beautiful Tennessee River, are working together to “navigate good health in 2014!” In keeping with this theme, the Health Department County Director, **Pattie Kiddy**, Health Educator, **Beth Hamilton**, TENNderCARE Outreach Worker, **Michelle Reynolds** and U. T. Extension Director, Sondra Apple are assisting Holly Broughton, Site Champion, with resources for the Hardin County Courthouse Fitness Challenge “Navigating Good Health.” In December, they visited every courthouse office to explain the challenge and invite employees to sign-up. Each employee received a “Walk with Walgreens” bag containing a walk journal and pedometer. Also, compliments of Hardin County Mayor, Kevin Davis, all county employees who participate will receive a free t-shirt.

Throughout 2014, activities will include monthly newsletters, quarterly educational sessions, weekly staff walks, health displays and healthy food samples with recipes. Each person will have an individual scorecard. Points will be earned for healthy food choices, miles walked, pounds lost, participation in weekly staff walks, and attending educational sessions. Awards will be given quarterly based on points earned. A final GRAND AWARD will be given in December 2014 for the employee who earns the most points overall. The Hardin County Courthouse Fitness Challenge Kick-Off was held on Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in the courthouse first floor lobby.

### TDH Staff Participate in National Public Health Improvement Program

*Submitted by Marilyn Barnes, West Tennessee Regional Director*

After a year of completing the requirements of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) *Survive and Thrive Program*, Coaches and Fellows from Tennessee arrived in Washington, D. C. on December 9, 2013, for the closing workshop. Fellows and Coaches were recognized at a graduation ceremony and provided the opportunity to discuss public health issues with state officials during visits to Capitol Hill.

Since 2008, nearly 190 new and aspiring local health officials have been trained through *Survive and Thrive*, which includes strategic planning, self-assessment and identification of approaches for addressing challenges unique to local health department leaders. Current and retired local health officials with five or more years of experience serve as *Survive and Thrive* coaches. These volunteer coaches complement the formal *Survive and Thrive* curriculum by guiding individual development plans, leading discussions about issues important to the program fellows, and reviewing assessments and performance reports.



*TDH staff who attended, from left to right: Fellow Angie Faulkner, Marshall and Bedford County Director; Fellow Shaun Street, Green County Director; Coach Marilyn Barnes, West Tennessee Regional Director; Fellow Janet McAlister, South Central Assistant Regional Director and Giles County Director; Fellow Gail Harmon, East TN Assistant Regional Director and Grainger County Director.*

(Continued from page 12)

## Mother and Community Advocate Sandy Alexander receives Commissioner's Award for spreading awareness for Safe Sleep in baby Grant's Memory

*Submitted by Janna Beth Shaull, RN, Southwest Regional Nursing Director, West TN Region*

Sandy Alexander & her husband Zach lost their first child Grant on June 9, 2009 due to an unsafe sleep environment. They now have 2 other children who are 3 years old & 1 year old and are dedicated to spreading awareness and informing their community about the importance of "Safe Sleep" in baby Grant's memory. On January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Sandy was recognized for her efforts by Department of Health Commissioner John Dreyzehner and awarded with the Commissioner's Award for Outstanding Service to Population.



She recently recorded a PSA to share her story and to inform parents and caregivers on the ABC's of safe sleep. Her PSA has aired throughout West TN on various radio stations; all are hoping that it will air statewide. Sandy is also collaborating with Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, one of the largest delivering hospitals in Tennessee, by encouraging them to provide all newborn babies a "sleep sack" to take home. The hospital has ordered 3,000 sleep sacks and Sandy will be helping to promote the project when it is launched in March.

Sandy continues to be a dedicated and amazing partner to the Tennessee Department of Health and a very important part of the statewide Safe Sleep campaign. Tara Rogers, Child Health Nurse & MCH Coordinator with the Jackson-Madison County Health Department, and Janna Beth Shaull, RN, Southwest Regional Nursing Director in the West TN Region who have worked closely with Sandy to build a relationship with her had this to say about Sandy...

"We can't thank Sandy enough for her dedication of time, but even more importantly, sharing her family's story of baby Grant. Grant did not get the opportunity to go to Kindergarten and learn his ABC's, however, with Sandy reaching out to share Grant's story, he will be teaching us a different kind of ABC's, one that will help change unsafe sleeping environments and help save lives."

*Pictured is Sandy Alexander along with Tara Rogers, with the Jackson-Madison County Health Department, & Janna Beth Shaull, RN, Southwest Regional Nursing Director.*

## Decatur County presents - "A Better U: Parent and Community Involvement Night"

*Submitted by Emily Rushing, MP - Public Health Educator II in Benton, Decatur and Henderson Counties*

On December 3, Decatur County Health Department PPI team members, Jill Duke, Faith Warren, Susan Trull and Health Educator, Emily Rushing, took part in the Decatur County's "A Better U: Parent and Community Involvement Night" at Riverside High School. Substance Abuse Prevention PPI team members distributed information to parents on the dangers of prescription drug abuse and spoke with parents on how to talk to their teen about drugs. Health Educator, Emily Rushing, provided healthy recipes and tips to parents about "Feeding Your Family: Preparing, Cheap, Easy and Healthy Meals" while utilizing the "Choose My Plate" model. The event was a great success as there were over 300 people in attendance.



*Pictured: Health Educator, Emily Rushing speaks to parents at "A Better U" event.*

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE EVENTS**

**Tennessee Public Health Association  
Annual Educational Conference**  
September 10-12, 2014  
**“Health and Home: Where you Live Matters”**  
Cool Springs Marriott Hotel and Convention Center  
Franklin, TN

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**East Tennessee Grand Division Meeting**  
Friday, April 25, 2014  
**“HEALTH & HOME: WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS”**  
Calhoun’s On the River  
400 Neyland Drive  
Knoxville, TN 37902  
8:30 am – 3:15 pm

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**West Tennessee Grand Division Meeting**  
University of Memphis  
May 2, 2014

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**Middle Tennessee Meeting**  
Williamson County Ag Center  
May 9, 2014

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**American Public Health Association**  
November 15-19, 2014  
**“Healthography: How Where You Live Affects Your Health and Well Being”**  
New Orleans, LA

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**NACCHO Annual Conference**  
July 9-11, 2014  
**“The New Era of Public Health: Science, Innovation and Policy”**  
Atlanta, GA