

Hometown News

“Solutions Through
Leadership & Teamwork”

March 2005

NE Region

Independence and Jackson County Host Dr. Robert Shepard

The Tobacco Free Initiative of Independence and Jackson Counties recently hosted Dr. Robert Shepard of Helena, MT to address the dangers of secondhand smoke to the residents of both counties. He presented 3 presentations during his visit on March 3rd. His first presentation was to the Arkansas State University – Newport nursing students and then to the community members in Jackson County at a noon presentation. He finished his lecture at University of Arkansas Community College in Batesville that evening to community members of Independence County. “His presentation was excellent and was well received by all of those in attendance”, said Dennis Moore, Independence County Hometown Wellness Coalition Chairperson. “Dr. Shepard was part of a team that was able to perform an actual study on the impact of a smoke free workplace law – nationally known as the Helena, MT Study”, concluded Moore.

The city of Helena enacted a

smoke free air law in September 2001 bringing smoke free air to all indoor workplaces, including restaurants and bars. The law was in effect for six months before it was suspended due to a legal challenge. During those six months a significant trend was observed at the regional hospital. The rate of heart attacks in the Helena area



declined by 40% while the smoke free air law was in effect, and then increased once the law was suspended. The study is the first of its kind to take a serious look at the short-term health impact of a smoke free workplace law.

Shepard stated that if you

dabble with alcohol you have a 1:10 chance of becoming an alcoholic; with cocaine you have a 1:6 chance of becoming an addict; with tobacco you have a 1:2 chance of becoming addicted. According to court documents the Tobacco Industry knew as early as 1961 how addictive and damaging cigarette smoke really was to the smoker. Now, thanks to

better epidemiological studies, it can be proven that side stream smoke is more dangerous than mainstream smoke.

Shepard gave details from excerpt from David Saltonstall's ON MAYOR'S BAN WATON *Daily News* (10/03/02). The excerpt affirmed that air quality tests

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Hometown Health Welcomes New Staff

Joyce Watkins, Rural Health Specialist, is stationed in the Batesville Regional Office. Joyce was born and raised in northern Ohio into a family of five. As a child she enjoyed the winters building snow forts, sledding, and swimming in the summer with her two siblings.

She later married a native of the state and moved to Northeast Arkansas in 1984 and soon became acquainted with the nuisance of ticks, chiggers, snakes, lizards, flies, and mosquitoes.

She and her husband have raised four children: three daughters and a son and are proud of a grandson and two great grandsons.

Joyce has worked for the department for 20 years before coming to Hometown Health.

Kelli Dunegan, Rural Health Specialist, is stationed in the Batesville Regional Office. She

is married with two children, Kaila is 15 and Kenzi is 6. The family enjoys church functions, camping, sporting events, and participating in horse shows.

Kelli has worked for the department for six years prior to coming to Hometown Health.

January 3rd was the start date for Mary Wells as the community health promotion specialist (CHPS) for Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Jackson, Mississippi, and Poinsett counties. Act 1220 created the CHPS position, and its primary function is to provide technical assistance to school district's Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committees (NPAAC).

CHPS are primarily housed in educational co-operatives, and Mary is based out of the Crowley's Ridge Educational Co-operative in Harrisburg. She specifically serves the school districts that the cooperative serves. The CHPS, like community health nurse specialists (CHNS),

support Healthy Arkansas by concentrating on children in schools and also being Hometown Health Improvement support staff.

She received her bachelor's degree in clinical dietetics from the University of Central Arkansas, and her master's degree in health science from the University of Arkansas. She is also a certified health education specialist (CHES) and was most recently employed as a health educator by the Jones Center for Families in Springdale.

Mary currently lives in Newport with her husband and two dogs, and she enjoys running, hiking, mountain biking, and gardening. She is enthusiastic about being involved with the progressive and innovative healthy endeavors taking place in Arkansas. She can be contacted by mailing mwells@healthyarkansas.com or calling (870) 578-7449.



Act 1220 of 2003 states that each school district will convene a Nutrition & Physical Activity Advisory Committee (NPAAC) to coordinate statewide efforts to combat childhood obesity and related illnesses and improve the

health of the next generation of Arkansans. The Child Health Advisory Committee created by Act 1220 recommends that each NPAAC committee complete the School Health Index (SHI) annually starting in the 2004-2005 school year.

The SHI is a Self-Assessment and Planning Guide created and provided free by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and can be used to improve your schools

health policies and programs with a special focus on the areas of physical activity, nutrition, tobacco free lifestyles, and the prevention of unintentional injuries and violence.

By completing the SHI, schools are able to identify strengths and weaknesses and develop an action plan for improving student health, which can be incorporated into a School Improvement Plan. One of the most important attributes of SHI is that it

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Coalition Kicks off Campaign to Improve Health...

On March 1, Crowley's Ridge Rural Health Coalition began a 14-week March into Fitness program.

Through a group of seminars, the benefits of healthier lifestyles through increased physical activity and healthier diets were discussed at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, Oak Grove Middle School, and at the county community center.

Physical fitness expert Robert Sweetgall, who has walked across America seven times since 1982, was on hand for the day of events. Originally from New York City, Sweetgall was a self-proclaimed overweight nerd who was the valedictorian of his class of 3500 students. He later went on to

obtain a degree in chemical engineering and worked for Dupont. After a family history of heart disease began to emerge, he decided it was time to do something about his health.

Taking a fanny pack, \$1000 in travel checks, and a tape player, Sweetgall set out to walk all 37 perimeter states beginning in Washington, D.C. In nine months, he had reached his goal. Whether it be through walking, gardening, golfing, hunting, bicycling, jogging, fishing or any other physical activity, Sweetgall promotes an increase in activity.

Through a grant from Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield -

Blue and You Foundation, the coalition purchased 500 pedometers and journals for participants to log their physical activity each day.

Participants in the program are asked to send information back to the coalition allowing the organization to keep track of participants' progress.

Prior to the beginning of the program, participants were offered free glucose and blood pressure screenings, which will be followed with another set of tests at the end of the program to assist in evaluating the program.

Kathy Smith

Dr. Shepard Continued

show spending a night in a New York bar is worse for your health than breathing exhaust fumes at the mouth of the Holland Tunnel. Following are the results of one such test:

Central Park-6 micrograms per cubic meter

Columbus Circle-8 micrograms per cubic meter

Mouth of the Holland Tunnel-17 micrograms per cubic meter

Typical nonsmoking bar-21 micrograms per cubic meter

Port Authority Bus Terminal-48 micrograms per cubic meter

Typical smoky bar-866 micrograms per cubic meter

Shepard reiterated that even occasional SHS (second hand smoke) increases the risk of developing acute coronary syndromes. Epidemiological studies have proven that after 20 minutes exposure, platelet

activation in non-smokers is not different than chronic smokers. According to the Helena study it is possible to conclude that eliminating the risk of exposure to SHS would reduce the risk of heart disease. Shepard concluded his presentation by suggesting that 100% smoke free ordinances have an important and immediate effect on cardiac risks.

Kelli Dunegan



School Health Index Continued from page 2

engages teachers, parents, students, and community members in promoting health-enhancing behaviors by providing them with specific opportunities to involve them in the school health assessment and planning processes.

The Community Health Nurse Specialists located in each Educational Cooperative can provide the SHI training and resources for your NPAAC work so feel free to contact them anytime.

Cecilia Vinson

“You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging”

Senior Citizens at the BRAD Center in Pocahontas have been taking part in a program entitled "You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging." The campaign targets Older Arkansans as part of the Healthy Arkansas Initiative in Randolph County. The campaign aims to boost physical activity and improve food choices; each participant receives a logbook, step counter, and

an exercise manual for evaluation purposes.

Persons over the age of 50 are eligible and encouraged to participate in the program.

Kathy Smith



Hometown Health

Mission

Provide leadership, guidance, and technical assistance to the local HHI leader to develop Hometown Health Improvement Initiatives that are locally owned and controlled and are working to improve the health of the citizens. Provide Hometown Health Improvement Leadership in the region.

Vision

Empowered local communities taking ownership of health problems and working to identify and implement solutions that improve the health of citizens.

Hometown Health Leaders Attend the Southern Rural Access Program Conference

Rhonda White, Stone County; Treva Engelhardt, Izard County; and Kathy Smith, Randolph County; attended the Winter 2005 Grantee Conference on February 23-25 at the Doubletree Hotel In Little Rock.

The conference focus was network development.

Specific health issues addressed were obesity reduction, chronic disease management and control, access to prescription medications, transportation, network and intervention sustainability.

1-866-NOW-QUIT
(1-866-669-7848)

TOP TEN REASONS TO QUIT.

10. Cyanide: One of the chemicals in cigarette smoke.
9. The \$1,000 a year pack-a-day smokers spend.
8. Ammonia: Used to clean toilets. Also found in cigarettes.
7. The seven years longer you'll live than those who smoke.
6. Smoking causes shortness of breath.
5. The breath you do have is not very pleasant.
4. We almost forgot the Formaldehyde in cigarettes.
3. Secondhand smoke kills thousands of non-smokers a year.
2. Vanity: Smoking causes wrinkles and can lead to tooth loss.
1. 100 Arkansans die each week from a tobacco-related illness.



www.arkansas.gov/ha/home



www.stampoutsmoking.com



Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor are welcome and will be published. The sender must be identified. Anonymous Letters will not be published.

