Northeast Region

HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

~A note from Bill Farris~

As we end CY2010, I want to thank all of our NE Region colleagues for striving to make a positive difference in lives of the citizens in our region through individual and population based services that provide them with an opportunity to live healthier and more productive lives. I once again want to applaud the efforts of our colleagues for the awesome job they performed during the mass flu clinic exercises & public school clinics. We certainly have made some significant strides in our public health preparedness efforts. More importantly, many citizens in the NE Region received their flu shot due to your efforts which greatly improves their chances of being healthy this winter. This is just one example of the many contributions our units have made during CY2010. My sincere wishes are for an even more successful CY2011 for public health in the NE Region.

I hope all of you have a very Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

Bill

This year has enriched our friendships and expanded our organizational horizons.

It has been an exceptional one. Together we've conquered projects, overtaken deadlines, and charted success after success.

As the year comes to a close, everyone should be commended on all that has been accomplished during the past months—chronic disease forum; building/ relocating clinics; implementing mass and school flu clinics and on and on.

Before the New Year is ushered in, appreciation should be expressed to everyone for what all has been accomplished in 2010.

Hat's off to the Northeast Region employees!!

December 2010

Secondhand Smoke Testimony

Mississippi Co—On Monday, November 15th the Mississippi County Coalition for a Tobacco Free Arkansas (MCCTFA) held their monthly coalition meeting with Lung Cancer Awareness being the focus of the meeting. Kavita Cork, a 21 year old non-smoker with stage two lung cancer presented information on the dangers of secondhand smoke. The Osceola East Lab and Blytheville High students were in attendance at this meeting to learn about how Ms. Cork having never used tobacco still contracted lung cancer from being around family members who smoke. Ms. Edwina Smith, from the Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI), was also present to provide information on the dangers of youth tobacco use and encourage Youth Extinguishing Smoking (YES) team membership.

Members of the Osceola East Lab, Blytheville High School and MCCTFA

Flu Stops With You

ADH, the Arkansas Department of Education, and local school districts statewide began offering the seasonal flu shot to school children in grades K-12 beginning in mid October and were conducted through early December. This year, the seasonal flu vaccine included protection from the H1N1 virus, so there wasn't a need for a separate shot – which made a lot of students and nurses happy.

Conference Follow Up on Women's Health

Craighead Co—On Saturday, November 6th the Cardiology Associates Foundation (CAF) provided free health screenings to approximately 60 members of the First Baptist Church in Jonesboro. As a follow up to the African American Women's Health Conference, CAF provided cholesterol, blood pressure, EKG, BMI, and glucose screenings free of charge. Amy Howell, Craighead County LHUA, was also present to offer flu shots.

Amy Howell, Craighead Co LHUA provides flu shots to conference attendees..

Mistletoe Madness

Craighead Co—The Cardiology Associates Foundation and Clopton Clinic Charitable Foundation recently concluded their 5th Annual **Mistletoe Madness**. Mistletoe Madness has become Jonesboro's most anticipated holiday shopping event. As in years past, all event proceeds go directly toward education for the support of Women and Heart Disease programs as well as to fund free screenings for the community each year at our Women's Health Conference and Diabetes Awareness Conference. This year's show began with a Wine and Cheese Tasting and 4 hours of exclusive shopping on Friday December 3rd from 6 pm—10 pm. Saturday the event was open to the public from 9am – 7pm.

Ninety-six vendors participated in this year's event.

Participants at the Annual Mistletoe Madness Event

Laughter is the Best Medicine

Overheard at the School Flu Clinics:

~An upset elementary boy that was getting the flu shot stated "I don't want this. It's my right to be sick".

~A watery eyed little boy stated that the flu mist didn't smell like cotton candy or bubble gum but deer camp. ***He didn't say if that was good or bad.***

~A middle school student: "I'm sorry my forms aren't filled out correctly. My stepmother is barely older than me."

~A little boy showed anger by hitting the wall after his shot because it didn't hurt and he had lost sleep for 2 weeks worrying about it.

Greene County Drug Prevention Luncheon

The **Greene County** Prevention Coalition heard presentations about drug education and prevention at its quarterly lunch meeting in October.

"If there is no market [for drugs], there will be no motivation to bring them into the community," Dr. Phil Hestand, director of the Arkansas State University Counseling Center, said when opening the meeting.

Teens Are Concerned (TAC), which is an organization made up of students from local high schools interested in being drug free and encouraging other teens to be drug free, talked about their program and presented a small skit in honor of Red Ribbon Week.

TAC presenting a small skit in honor of Red Ribbon Week for Greene County Prevention Coalition

Oral Health and Tobacco Education in Mississippi

Mississippi County—On Monday, October 25th the Mississippi County Coalition for a Tobacco Free Arkansas held their monthly coalition meeting with *Oral Health and Tobacco* as the topic. Dr. Higginbotham, of Higginbotham Family Dental, presented information on the dangers tobacco can cause on your mouth and body. He also provided information on the importance of proper oral healthcare while providing coalition members with samples and discounts to Higginbotham Family Dental. Dr. Higginbotham is a Mississippi County native and is currently working on obtaining grants for the newly created foundation to offer free services to NEA low income residents.

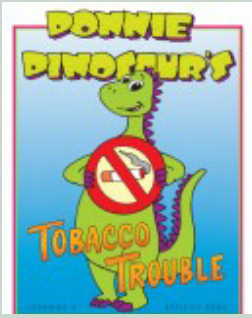
Top: Dr. Higginbotham and Elroy Brown MCCTFA Chair. Left: Dr. Higginbotham's staff (Lai and Lilly) and Elroy Brown (center) display information on the dangers of tobacco.

Besides the link between tobacco and heart disease, stroke, emphysema, and cancer (especially lung and throat cancers), smoking leads to the following oral health consequences:

- Bad breath
- Tooth discoloration
- Inflammation of the salivary gland openings on the roof of the mouth
- Increased build up of plaque and tartar on the teeth
- Increased loss of bone within the jaw
- Increased risk of leukoplakia, white patches inside the mouth
- Increased risk of developing gum disease, a leading cause of tooth loss
- Delayed healing process following tooth extraction, periodontal treatment, or oral surgery
- Lower success rate of dental implant procedures
- Increased risk of developing oral cancer

Heart & Sole 5k Run/Walk

Craighead Co—On Saturday, September 25th the Cardiology Associates Foundation (CAF) held their 6th Annual Heart and Sole 5k Run/Walk and offered an additional ½ marathon competition, as well. This annual event is open to all to raise awareness and funds to support heart disease awareness. Several local groups participated as volunteers to keep the runners/walkers on course and hydrated while dressed in different themed costumes at each mile marker. The Craighead County Health Unit also participated by having a



Community Education

Cross Co—Linda Robinson, RHPS, presented Donnie the Dinosaur (tobacco curricula for pre-K—3rd grades), hand washing tips, nutrition and physical activity tips to approximately 50 day care students in 2 daycares in the county.

Woodruff Co—Linda Robinson, RHPS, presented "Smoking: Truth or Dare?" to approximately 50 5th graders at McCrory Middle School recently.

If you are interested in the above presentations for your community, please contact your HHI Support person for details.

Work Action Institute

Several members of the **Independence County** Hometown Wellness Coalition attended the Action Institute in Atlanta, GA November 16th—18th. As recipients of a Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant, members participated in the institute as part of the grant guidelines. The action filled agenda included: opportunities and responsibilities; recipes for changing unhealthy food choices to healthy choices in every community; healthy built environments; prevention in schools; public policy to reduce tobacco use; and school environments addressing obesity.

DARE to be Stress Free This Holiday

Whether you're celebrating Thanksgiving, Christmas, St. Nicholas, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice, Navidades, Hanukkah, St. Lucia Day, Boxing Day or New Year's, the holidays are inherently stressful.

Decide now whether this year will be full of the season's stressful traps or if it will be filled with many treasured memories. Take some time to set priorities and make the necessary changes so the holidays are inspiring and energizing instead of a drain. Pay attention to what your needs and wishes are for your body, mind, and heart while finding the balance with sharing with others.

Operating on automatic can add even more stress causing unhappiness, sickness, poor relationships and lack of energy. Why not improve your ability to handle stress by practicing the following effective ways to cope with stress. DARE to Relax includes: D = Diet; A = Attitude and Awareness; R = Rest, Relaxation and Relationships; E = Exercise.

DIET: Don't deprive yourself of essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals that can help you reduce the effects of daily stress. Stress uses up your supply of vitamins A, B and C which can lead to feeling irritable and tired.

ATTITUDE AND AWARENESS: Research shows that as much as 75% of illnesses are the result of experiencing too much stress. Not being able to handle stress properly can decrease the effectiveness of your immune system. Become more aware of how you respond to tension and stress in your life and begin to make adjustments.

REST AND RELAXATION: It is much easier to handle stress if you are rested and know how to remain calm. Getting 7 to 8 hours of sleep every night is essential. Although recreation and being diverted from stress is helpful (playing a sport, watching a movie) true relaxation is different. It involves giving yourself an honest break from activity and excess stimulation. Breathing deeply, smoothly, slowly and from the diaphragm is relaxing since it too sends a fresh supply of blood to the brain and throughout the body. It oxygenates your system and even slows down the heartbeat.

EXERCISE: When under stress, there is an increase of adrenalin in the system as part of the flight or fight response, which can drain you of energy if not effectively released. Exercise regularly to work stresses off positively. This can improve your productivity and increase your energy. Be sure to choose physical activity that you enjoy.

Quick Tips for Stress Reduction

- Have a positive attitude.
- Try not to worry about things out of your control.
- Problem solve with people around you. Ask them to help you alleviate stress.
- Exercise. A few extra minutes of exercise a day can benefit your overall health.
- Eat nutritional food. Decrease the amount of fat and sugar you consume.
- Meditate, or take a class in relaxation and stretching techniques --like Tai Chi or Yoga.
- Avoid drinking caffeinated beverages
- Rest. Try to get eight hours of sleep each day.