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COMMUNITY WELLNESS

MEET THE COMMUNITY HEALTH TEAM

BY: AMBER HAMMOND

In this special edition of the Community Wellness Newsletter, we will take you through the divisions of community health and introduce you to us and what we do.

This year, National Public Health week is April 1-7. Therefore, we want to show you a little bit about the people behind community health in your area.

There is the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program, the Lead Program, the Chronic Disease team, Tobacco Cessation Education (Tobacco Free Florida), and the Epidemiology Program. Each one of these departments take on their own responsibilities, and work together to help support the community.

Behind every community project, there are real people from your community that want to make a difference.



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JENNIFER WASKOVICH, MS, RDN, LDN, CLC

COMMUNITY HEALTH DIRECTOR

Public Health is not something I knew about when choosing my career path but it is the area I have worked in for almost 20 years. My parents know I went to school and earned a master's degree in clinical dietetics along with obtaining my Registered Dietitian Credential, but my mom recently asked me, what do I really do? The answer was not a one sentence response, because there is so much our Community Health Division does for public health.

In short, my job, along with all my teammates, is to protect and improve the health of the communities in Hillsborough County. Our office is filled with passionate individuals who, day in and day out, are working to promote healthy lifestyles and disease prevention. We do this a number of ways, including: providing education programs on diabetes, heart health and weight management; disease reporting, investigations and education to reduce the transmission of diseases; resource referrals; and creating partnerships in the county to make breast and cervical cancer screenings, dental services, and family planning services more accessible to those in need.

As our name, Community Health, refers, we are working with our partners and communities to determine how we can best support them as they strive for good health and well-being. We know we cannot do this alone and that input from those we work with and for is important. Our organization gathers feedback, along with our partners, through a Community Health Assessment. Based on the information received locally and focus areas found in our State Health Improvement Plan, community objectives and action plans are developed to help meet the needs of Hillsborough County. Areas of focus over the last decade have ranged from reducing obesity and diabetes rates to improving access to care for medical and behavioral health services.

As you can see, our Community Health Division plays a big role in public health efforts in Hillsborough County. Our role will continue to transform, and we will adapt to the ever changing/growing needs of our communities. I am happy to be a part of a team that values the work we do and truly cares about those we are serving. We want everyone to have the opportunity to live a long and healthy life. My team is here to support the community and help make that happen.

“Our office is filled with passionate individuals who, day in and day out, are working to promote healthy lifestyles and disease prevention.”

Have a question or comment? Email us: DLCHD29WebsiteDistribution@flhealth.gov

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BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER EARLY DETECTION PROGRAM

We serve our community with life-saving health screenings.



ANA VALENCIA-HERNANDEZ

WHAT WE DO

The Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (FBCC) is designed to provide affordable or free breast and cervical screenings to eligible women, empowering them to achieve optimal health.

The FBCC program is working tirelessly to explore innovative solutions to provide mammogram screenings to women in need. We have partnered with different mobile mammography providers to bring care directly to patients, ensuring that women have access to the medical services they need.



FUN FACT:

If I could live anywhere else in the world, it would probably be Italy so I could eat all the pasta and pizza I wanted.

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL WHILE WORKING IN THIS PROGRAM?

As a Human Service Program Analyst for the FBCC program, my main goal is to provide compassionate care coordination to all our patients, whether they're new or returning. I understand how daunting a health care journey can be, and that's why I strive to address every unique need with utmost dedication and empathy. I want each patient to feel reassured and supported throughout their journey, knowing that they're in good hands. It's an honor to help in any way I can, whether it's scheduling appointments, processing payments or referring them to other medical services, and I'm committed to making a positive difference in their lives.

LEAD PROGRAM

We help the community by providing education and essential screenings to keep children safe.

WHAT WE DO

The Lead Program aims to reduce the prevalence of childhood lead poisoning in Hillsborough County. We educate health care professionals and the public about the hazards of lead poisoning. We also identify and provide follow-up care to children with lead poisoning. This includes the provision of care coordination to children with high blood lead levels and education to residents and contractors about lead poisoning on lead hazards and remediation from residential neighborhoods.



JORGE FLORES

WHAT DO YOU WANT THE PUBLIC TO KNOW MOST ABOUT LEAD PREVENTION

Lead poisoning is 100% preventable and all it takes is a little bit of knowledge.

STATISTICS

The program handled 303 pediatric and 197 adult cases between January and December 2023. The program participated in over 25 outreach events that included screenings, lunch and learns, presentations, health fairs and trainings. The program also maintained its relationships with community partners where ongoing collaboration and education takes place to reduce the risk of lead exposure.

FUN FACT:

Jorge is an award-winning educator with an unparalleled passion for public health and those he serves. He also plays music in a rock band!

TOBACCO CESSATION

We help the community through tobacco cessation education and outreach.

WHAT WE DO

As members of the tobacco team, we lead outreach and educational activities to support tobacco prevention in the community. This includes tobacco products like cigarettes, dip, and chew as well as electronic nicotine delivery devices (vaping products). On a day-to-day basis, this looks like assessing what tobacco products are sold in retail stores to see how products are marketed to community members, such as youth. We meet with partners about the program and how we can work together to promote tobacco-free spaces in the community, such as parks. We also participate in outreach that includes health fairs and other events, where we meet directly with community members to provide education on the benefits of quitting tobacco products and help anyone interested connect to the Quitline for help with quitting tobacco products.



ALISHA JONES

FUN FACT:

I love to line dance and attend line dance competitions.

STATISTICS

The Tobacco Program focused efforts on youth prevention activities through the expansion of Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) clubs in local schools, as well as through community outreach events. Staff also worked on cessation and prevention efforts with community partners, such as the county's Parks and Recreation Department and local multiunit housing complexes to increase smoke free environments in Hillsborough County.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT THIS PROGRAM AND YOUR ROLE?

I get to help make a positive impact in the community!

TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA

[Quit Your Way](#)

1-877-U-CAN-NOW (1-877-822-6669)

EPIDEMIOLOGY

We help the community through research, investigation, and education regarding the spread of diseases.

INTRO TO EPI

Epidemiology is the study of how diseases spread and affect communities by looking at patterns and possible causes and effects of health and disease conditions in specific populations. The Epidemiology Program at the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County primarily focuses on investigating cases and outbreaks of reportable diseases, monitoring disease trends, and providing education to the public and community partners on ways to prevent or reduce disease transmission. Some examples of reportable diseases that this program might investigate include salmonella, hepatitis, pertussis, Lyme disease, and malaria; all of which are required to be reported to the department by all health providers licensed to practice medicine, hospitals, and labs.



NICKELL BROWN



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT EPIDEMIOLOGY

In the Epidemiology Program, we are passionate about the health of the community. We help to educate you on the best ways to prevent the spread of diseases and provide guidance on what we all can do together to stay healthy. Investigating, collecting data, and identifying patterns of potential health risks, allows us to find the best resources to keep you and your family healthy and safe.

FUN FACT

I enjoy creating adventures with my family and vacationing on Caribbean beaches.

WHAT WE DO

On any given day, the Epidemiology Program may be working on tasks that include monitoring current disease trends, contacting and interviewing individuals to determine disease exposure, conducting site inspections for investigations, transporting lab samples for testing through our state laboratory, and providing education and technical assistance to health care providers and the community on the management of diseases.

Reportable disease data is also collected and analyzed to identify case rates, trends, and distribution of disease in our community. This allows for timely responses to disease investigations, timely communication to providers, the public, and community partners; and targeted prevention activities in the community. Additionally, our team is very active in the community and can be seen performing outreach and holding health education activities related to infectious diseases of public health significance.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Epidemiology Program at 813-307-8010 for assistance.

STATISTICS

In 2023, the Hillsborough Epidemiology Program conducted investigations for 3,438 cases of reportable illnesses. The staff also provided over 20 presentations and training on communicable disease prevention, and collaborated with other state agencies to complete investigations. The program plays a crucial role in creating a healthier Hillsborough County.



RESPIRATORY ILLNESS IN HILLSBOROUGH

Hillsborough Flu Review

Keeping you in the know

As temperatures drop and noses start to run, the annual onset of respiratory illnesses begin to take residence and stay until summer. And as we now emerge from the winter months and jump into spring, we may start to forget about the common cold and Influenza (flu). However, because of Florida's warmer temperatures, we can see respiratory illnesses occur throughout the year, making it hard to predict what the respiratory trends will be.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Most respiratory infections are spread mainly through droplets produced when someone coughs, sneezes, or talks. Less often, a person might get the flu by touching a surface or object that has flu particles on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or their eyes. However, symptoms vary among the different infections.



Common symptoms of flu include high fevers, cough, body aches and pains, headaches, fatigue, and sore throat.

Although individual positive cases of the flu and RSV are not reportable diseases in the state, our Epidemiology Program does monitor trends, any unusual presentations, and investigates any

outbreaks associated with respiratory illness. Flu season in Florida starts typically the first week in October and lasts through mid-May every year but monitoring flu and respiratory disease trends occurs throughout the year.

If you have symptoms, stay home, get tested, and seek treatment if your symptoms become severe or last longer than a few weeks. Please speak with your provider before taking any medications for symptoms. Additionally, practice good hand hygiene, improve ventilation and airflow in your homes, and stay home when you are sick to decrease further spread of disease. Together, we can keep Hillsborough healthy!



Information regarding flu and RSV in Florida can be found at the links below:

[Florida Influenza Surveillance Reports | Florida Department of Health \(floridahealth.gov\)](https://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/flu-and-rsv/flu-surveillance-reports.html)

[Respiratory Syncytial Virus Surveillance | Florida Department of Health \(floridahealth.gov\)](https://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/flu-and-rsv/rsv-surveillance.html)

CHRONIC DISEASE PROGRAMMING

We help create a healthier community through health education classes and outreach.

DIABETES SELF-MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) is a program developed to help those that are diagnosed with diabetes, either type 1 or 2. DSME can help improve A1c levels and reduce the risk for developing complications due to diabetes. DSME works! Each session provides valuable tools and information designed to help you take control of your diabetes. The program covers reducing risks of diabetes, healthy eating, carbohydrate exchanges, physical activity, monitoring blood glucose, medications, and healthy coping. Those who take DSME will increase their knowledge about diabetes and reduce complications that could result from diabetes, set your own goals, and make step-by-step plan to achieve them, learn how simple changes in diet and physical activity can help people to manage diabetes and feel better! They will also learn how to communicate better with their doctor and develop problem-solving and coping skills to better manage diabetes daily.

BLOOD PRESSURE SELF-MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

BP for Me is a blood pressure management and prevention program designed to help those looking to take control of their high blood pressure and those looking to prevent or delay the onset of high blood pressure. BP for Me will increase someone's knowledge of blood pressure and help them learn about the risk factors for developing high blood pressure. They will also learn how to reduce complications that could result from high blood pressure and just feel better!



DEANNA DORAN

WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW MOST ABOUT HEART HEALTH?

Super simple swaps can go a long way toward preventing heart issues or stroke! Try using olive oil instead of butter; buy herbs and sodium-free spices instead of salt. Check out the American Heart Association for more tips or take a class at the Florida Department of Health. Your heart will thank you!

FUN FACT:

I enjoy cooking, spending time playing pickleball with my kids, and taking long walks with my golden retrievers.

In addition, those who take BP for Me will learn the skills to set goals and make a step-by-step plan to achieve them. Blood pressure management works! This program provides valuable tools and information designed to help take control of blood pressure. Participants will learn how to reduce their risk for complications due to high blood pressure through healthy eating, stress management, physical activity, and more!



WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT YOU AND YOUR POSITION?

I am a former physical therapist turned health educator with a passion for bridging individual wellness and community health. Fueled by an interest in health data analysis, I'm committed to empowering others with knowledge and fostering positive lifestyle changes for a healthier, more informed society.

FUN FACT:

Pregnancy turned my sweet tooth into a stand-up routine. My baby, the ultimate food critic, kept me away from sweets – no 'baby weight' allowed.

KAUMINI HERATH-MUDIYANSELAGE

NICOLE ABRAHAMSEN

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR POSITION

Having the opportunity to continuously witness individuals achieving their goals and learning how to sustain them through team engagement and resource-driven exploration is one of my favorite parts about promoting healthy lifestyles for the community I serve.

FUN FACT:

I've dreamed of living in a treehouse since I was young.

DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM



We proudly offer the CDC's Prevent T2 Lifestyle Change Program, also commonly known as the Diabetes Prevention Program, throughout Hillsborough County. This evidence-based program has been proven to reduce risk of type 2 diabetes by 58% in adults who achieve weight loss of 5-7% of their body weight. Our trained lifestyle coaches lead the program over the course of one-year, empowering the participants with the skills and knowledge needed to create sustainable, healthy, lifelong habits. Topics discussed include how to create a balanced plate, increasing physical activity, managing stress, and getting better sleep. Participants in our Diabetes Prevention Program lost an average of 6.2% of their total body weight (the goal being 5%).



GET INTO FITNESS TODAY

Get Into Fitness Today, or GIFT, is a wellness weight loss program that focuses on healthy eating, physical activity, and ways to live a healthier life. GIFT is a NACCHO model practice award winning program that was developed in house by registered dietitians, nurses, and health educators. GIFT focuses on small gradual changes in lifestyle habits, which research shows leads to sustainable health improvements. Those who participant in GIFT will learn action planning for health, portion control for weight loss, improved nutrition, physical activity tips, how to cook, shop, and eat out-healthy, handling parties and social events, water intake, and disease prevention. GIFT works! Since 2007, GIFT has reached over 3,500 people in Hillsborough County. Of these, over 75% lost weight, improved their lifestyle habits and improved their health.

GET INTO FITNESS TOGETHER - A LEARNING AND EMOTIONAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM

GIFT LEAP or Get Into Fitness Together- A Learning and Emotional Activity Program, is designed to teach children ages 5-9 years old, that healthy eating and physical activity can be fun! The program also encourages parents and/or caregivers to attend with their children and gain tools to encourage healthy eating habits, increase physical activity, and incorporate healthy lifestyles into a busy schedule. GIFT LEAP helps children learn healthy eating, portion sizes, food variety, whole foods, where food comes from, physical activity, ways to lower stress, and healthy coping.

TRAINING

The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County offers two training opportunities. The Diabetes Prevention Program Lifestyle Coach training and Get Into Fitness Today facilitator training.

The Diabetes Prevention Program Lifestyle Coach training will prepare individuals to serve as lifestyle coaches to deliver the evidence-based National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP). The training includes: 12-hour training delivered in a variety of formats, virtual or in-person options available, training provided by a Master Trainer Select by DTTAC, a CDC approved training entity, training materials, Lifestyle Coach will have access to a network platform of ongoing support through Common Ground, DTTAC's online learning community for lifestyle coaches, and program materials of facilitator and student guidebook.

The Get Into Fitness Today facilitator training will prepare individuals to serve as instructors to deliver the GIFT curriculum, approved by the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County. The training includes: four hour training virtual or in-person options available, training provided by a Master Trainer in the health department, gaining knowledge of various facilitation skills, how to deliver the program's curriculum, and program material of facilitator and student guidebook.



MANDY BARRY

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT WORKING WITH PEOPLE?

I enjoy working with people who are committed to changing their health for the better. Change is not easy sometimes, but when they're in the headspace of improving their lifestyle, I'll be their biggest support and will cheer for them every step of the way. By the time the program is complete, they'll be a different person than when they started

FUN FACT:

Mandy has run two of the World Marathon Majors!

Want to be a healthier you? We can help!

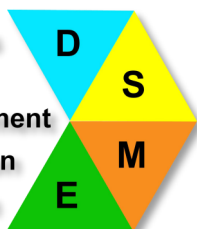
The Florida Department of Health has **FREE** health education programs.
Call **813-307-8009** to register or visit **GetIntoFitnessToday.net**.

BP F♥R ME

BP For Me

The Blood Pressure Management Education Program is a 5-week program that helps participants understand what your blood pressure numbers mean and how an increased blood pressure can increase your risk of illness.

Diabetes
Self-
Management
Education
Program



Diabetes Self Management Education

The Diabetes Self-Management Education program is a 6-week program that gives participants the tools to monitor glucose at home, make lifestyle changes, learn valuable information on medications and insulin, and make informed choices about foods and carbohydrates to manage diabetes.



Diabetes Prevention Program

Our Diabetes Prevention Program is a year-long program with 26 sessions designed around behavior modification that will give you the tools needed to cope with stressors, choose more nourishing meals, and once and for all get into an exercise routine!



Get Into Fitness Today

The Get into Fitness Today program is a 12-week program that is all things health and wellness. It utilizes science-based information to reduce chronic diseases through obesity prevention.



Get Into Fitness Together– a Learning Emotional Activity Program (GIFT-LEAP)

This program is designed to encourage children ages 5-9 to make healthy choices so that they can lead a healthy lifestyle into adulthood.

BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER EARLY DETECTION PROGRAM

We offer **FREE** mammogram and pap smear testing.

For more information and to schedule an appointment, call **813-307-8082**.

Upcoming mobile mammography:

3/9/2024 - Grace and Peace Global Fellowship (Health Fair)

3/14/2024 - Tampa Family Health Center

3/29/2024 - Tampa Family Health Center

4/19/2024 - Tampa Family Health Center

4/26/2024 - Tampa Family Health Center

Fl♥rida KidCare FLORIDA KIDCARE

The Florida health insurance for children for those that are eligible, birth through age 18, even if one or both parents are working.

To apply by phone, call **888-540-5437**, or

TTY-877-316-8748.

To apply online, visit: FloridaKidCare.org.



FL HEALTH CHARTS

Have you ever wondered how healthy your community or state is? Or how your own health status compares to other Floridians? If so, Florida Health Charts is a great resource that paints an accurate picture of the health status of our state.

FLHealthCHARTS.com.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Florida State Parks

FloridaStateParks.org

Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation, and Conservation

HillsboroughCounty.org

Plant City Parks and Recreation

PlantCityGov.com/ParksRec

Tampa Parks and Recreation

TampaGov.net/Parks-and-Recreation

Temple Terrace Parks and Recreation

TempleTerrace.com

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Health Education 307-8009

Breast/Cervical Cancer 307-8082

Diabetes 307-8009

Tobacco Prevention 559-4760

Weight Management 307-8009

Health Literacy 307-8071

Insulin Program 307-8009

Lead Poisoning Prevention 307-8071

School Health 307-8071

Office of Minority Health..... 307-8066

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH307-8059

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NUTRITION/WIC307-8074

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PUBLIC HEALTH

PREPAREDNESS307-8042

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER307-8044

VITAL STATISTICS

(birth and death records) 307-8002

* All numbers are area code (813) unless otherwise indicated.



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MISSION: To protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.