



HEALTH BEAT



Volume 1, Issue 4

May 12, 2008

Calendar of Events:

- **May 5**—Join members of the Baltimore City Health Department and the Living Legacy Foundation for the Workplace Partner for Life Press Conference at UMMC at 10:30 AM.
- **May 7**—WOW
- **May 12**—WOW Potluck Lunch. Join us from 1:00-2:00 in the Cafeteria at 210 Guilford Avenue for a healthy lunch.
- **May 12**—Baltimore City Health Department, Baltimore City Fire Department and Baltimore Health-Care Access launch Operation Care to assist vulnerable city residents who make multiple calls for ambulance transport.
- **May 13**—Share your comments and concerns about the city budget at Taxpayer's Night. This event will take place at 6:00 PM in the City Council Chambers.
- **May 14**—WOW
- **May 16**—Bike to Work Day. Between 7:00 and 8:30 AM bicycle commuters throughout Baltimore City will converge at the War Memorial Plaza. BCHD group rides will be starting near Patterson Park and Charles Village. For more information contact Joel Palmer (Patterson Park) or Caroline Fichtenberg (Charles Village).
- **May 16**—Celebrate a new community health partnership between the YMCA of Central Maryland and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield to foster healthy behaviors and fight childhood obesity. The press conference will be at 9:30 AM at the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Family Center at 900 East 33rd Street.
- **May 19 to 23**—Bike to Work Week
- **May 21**—WOW
- **May 22**—Wine and Dine for Animals! Join BARCS at Chiapparelli's Restaurant in Little Italy for an all day fundraiser. Chiapparelli's will donate a portion of the entire day's proceeds to BARCs. Call today to make your lunch or dinner reservation (410) 837-0309. Tell them you are "dining for BARCs."
- **May 26**—Memorial Day
- **May 28**—WOW

Message from the Commissioner



One of the challenges of public health is that virtually every program is funded from separate sources, making collaboration more difficult.

As the weather gets warmer, we all should come together to protect vulnerable residents in the city from the effects of heat.

As we've learned from previous summers, heat can be deadly. The combination of lack of air conditioning and social isolation is particularly dangerous for the chronically ill and elderly.

Heat increases the demands on the heart and muscles. People who live at the edge can suffer serious complications or even death.

In the coming weeks, Baltimore will announce its 2008 Code Red plan. We'll send a copy to everyone with an email account. It's

critical that everyone at the Health Department keep an eye out for people who aren't coping well with the heat. Give them information about cooling centers and, if they are especially vulnerable, you can follow the instructions in the Code Red plan on how to refer them for outreach.

I'm particularly worried this year because the high cost of energy has led to many utility cutoffs -- and because global warming isn't going away anytime soon.

Mayor Dixon is leading a major effort to make Baltimore a more environmentally sustainable city. As this effort progresses, we'll have to help out one person at a time.

Employee Spotlight: School Health

In recognition of May 7th as National School Nurse Day, the School Health Division spotlights Juliette Ghee-Pratt, Certified Nursing Assistant, who has been employed as a School Health Aide since April, 1986.

Ms. Ghee-Pratt is currently assigned to the Diggs Johnson Middle School, where she has been an integral part of the Parent Involvement Committee for the past three years. One of the goals of this Committee is to increase the health awareness and mental well-being of all families involved. The school, with assistance from Ms. Ghee Pratt and her delegating nurse, is now able to provide parents with the resources necessary to live and maintain healthy lifestyles. Ms. Ghee-Pratt's pleasant personality and her ability to establish and maintain a good rapport with students, parents, school staff and co-workers

makes her perfect for this assignment.

Ms. Ghee-Pratt assists in training her fellow school health aides in an effort to improve both their work performance and job satisfaction. Over the years, Ms. Ghee-Pratt has also assisted in training new school nurses in the proper utilization of various forms and documentation for the School Health Assessment Program. Two of these nurses have since been promoted to School Health supervisors.

When she's not at work, Ms. Ghee-Pratt has been a foster parent, and has since adopted two children who have grown to be productive teenagers.

Ms. Ghee-Pratt often says, "I love my job," and it shows in her day to day job performance. For this and many other reasons, we honor Juliette Ghee-Pratt and thank her for her dedicated service.



This year at our Annual Nurses and Health Aides Breakfast, the following persons were honored:

Nurse of the Year: Margaret Singleton, Community Health Nurse II, School-Based Health Centers Program

"Health Aide" of the Year: Cherina Stevenson, Public Health Investigator, Baltimore HealthCare Access

Congratulations to Margaret and Cherina!

National Nurses Week 2008

Each Year, National Nurses Week is celebrated from May 6, also known as National Nurses Day; through May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing.

During this week, the Baltimore City Health Department would like to acknowledge the many outstanding efforts of its public health nurses and nursing assistants, whose primary focus is to promote health and prevent disease for entire population groups.

We see the results of the efforts of these dedicated men and women in reduced rates in teen pregnancy, low birth weight babies, infant mortality, sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, childhood lead poisoning, premature institutionalization of the elderly, and increased rates of childhood immunization.

We commend all of you for a job well done! Happy National Nurses Week.

May is National Asthma Awareness Month

On May 5, 2008, the Baltimore City Council passed 08-0041R. Council President Rawlings-Blake worked with the Health Department to draft this resolution, which was introduced in recognition of May as National Asthma Awareness Month.

Below are some helpful tips for preventing and controlling asthma.

- **Make sure you or your child has an Asthma Action Plan.** You should work with your health care

provider to develop this plan. This plan is a guide for what medications to take, how often to take them, and in what quantity. It will also provide the steps to take if the asthma gets worse. Every asthma action plan is tailored to the individual patient.

- **Monitor lung function.** According to your health care provider's instructions, monitor lung function. Many patients use a peak flow meter daily to measure their peak flows and these readings can indicate a recent exposure to a trigger

or the need to change medications. Your asthma action plan will include instructions on what to do if lung function changes.

- **Minimize exposure to indoor environmental asthma triggers.** You can reduce asthma attacks by addressing a variety of environmental asthma triggers inside the home.

Work Out Wednesday

Every Wednesday at noon, BCHD employees meet in the Executive Office ready for a 20 minute walk along one of two routes: Inner Harbor or Mount Vernon.



May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. To find out how you can start a physical activity program today and stay active and fit for life while earning Presidential awards, join the National President's Challenge. To sign up go to www.presidentschallenge.org.

BARCS Yard Sale—Sunday June 1st!

Perfect timing for a little spring-cleaning! BARCS is holding a **Yard Sale** to help raise funds for the shelter on **Sunday, June 1**, and we are looking for donated items. Please drop off your gently used items at BARCS on Friday, May 30th (12:30pm-6pm) and Saturday, May 31 (11am-4pm) during regular business hours. **On June 1st, the Yard Sale will be held from 7am to 2pm.** Refreshments will be available for a minimal donation. Please no computer equipment. Directions to BARCS can be found on our website at www.baltimoreanimalshelter.org or call us at 410-396-4695.

Update from the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response

On April 17, 2008, the BCHD Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response (OPHPR) held a tabletop exercise in the Curran Room in City Hall, testing the draft version of the BCHD Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan. The exercise was drafted and facilitated by Michael Stallings and Michael Craven, both from OPHPR.

The purpose of the exercise was to test the capabilities of the COOP plan in its draft stage, utilizing a discussion-based, low-stress format. Capabilities tested by the exercise included: alert and notification, communication, site

operations, alternate facilities, public information and media information, and Incident Command. Forty-three "players" from BCHD participated in this successful exercise, and it was observed by personnel from the City's Office of Emergency Management, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, as well as a neighboring jurisdiction's health department.

COOP is an all-hazards planning approach to ensure that essential BCHD functions are back up and running within 12 hours of an emergency event and to sustain those functions for up to 14 days. A COOP

plan enables governments and jurisdictions to preserve, maintain, and/or reconstitute their capability to perform their essential functions in the event of any disaster or emergency that could potentially disrupt government/jurisdiction/private-sector operations and service.

Following the exercise, recommendations and actions have been evaluated by the COOP planning team within OPHPR and will be translated into a final COOP plan which will be essential for the continuity of BCHD's essential functions during any emergency scenario.

Healthy Start Sets Sail

All aboard for Healthy Start's inaugural fundraiser on the Spirit of Baltimore cruise ship, Inner Harbor—Light Street
Thursday June 26, 2008
6:00 PM to 9:30 PM
Tickets are \$75 per person
Dinner, Casino, Dancing and Silent Auction

For more information please call Healthy Start at (410) 396-7318



Health Department Recognizes Area Restaurants

Recently, the "dirty side" of dining has made the top story in local news. And since the summer of 2006, the Health Department has posted on its website a listing of food establishment closures. Up until now, the public has been made aware of only those places of which it should be weary. The Health Department, however, will soon provide public guidance on which food facilities maintain excellent food safety practices. The Department will begin a new program that will recognize and award food establishments that exceed mandatory safety and sanitation requirements. Stay tuned for further details!



THE AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

MAYOR SHEILA DIXON'S
2ND ANNUAL 1.5 Mile Walk and
New 5K Run
Saturday, June 28, 2008
M&T Stadium

Sponsored by St. Agnes Hospital

For Registration Information
www.charmcityrun.com

For BCHD Team
Information Contact:
Rianna.Brown@BaltimoreCity.Gov

Save the Date for BARCStoberfest!

The 4th Annual **BARCStoberfest** will be held on **Saturday, October 18, 2008**, in Patterson Park (rain date is October 19). Details to come in next month's Health Beat!

Baltimore City Health Department

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