



HEALTH BEAT



Volume 1, Issue 5

June 9, 2008

Calendar of Events:

- **June 1**—Join us at the BARCS Yard Sale from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM to help raise funds for the shelter. Refreshments will be available for a minimum donation. Please call (410) 396-4695 for more information.
- **June 4**—WOW
- **June 5**—The ABC's of Heart Disease Prevention will begin at 1:00 at the Orleans Street Branch Library—1303 Orleans Street, Baltimore, MD 21231. At this event you can learn the ABC approach to reducing your risk factors for heart disease, learn to use the computer to get information to reduce your risk, get resources from the Health Department to access healthcare and get free blood pressure measurement.
- **June 7**—Join us for Summer's Coolest Family Fun Fair from 1:00-4:00 PM at Druid Hill Park. For more information call (410) 889-2300 or visit www.familytreemd.org.
- **June 11**—WOW
- **June 18**—WOW
- **June 19**—The 2008 Maryland HIV/AIDS Prevention Youth Summit will take place at the Holiday Inn—Inner Harbor (301 W Lombard Street)—from 9:00 AM to 4:15 PM. Please call (410) 332-7467 x200 for more information.
- **June 21**—Join us from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the African American Men's Health Conference at the Baltimore Convention Center. For more information call 1-800-787-4337.
- **June 25**—WOW
- **June 26**—All aboard for Healthy Start's inaugural fundraiser on the Spirit of Baltimore cruise ship, Inner Harbor—Light Street. The event is from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM, and tickets are \$75 per person. For more information please call Healthy Start at (410) 396-7318.
- **June 27 – 29**—The African American Heritage Festival will be held at 333 Camden Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. Please visit the Festival's website at <http://aahf.net/2008/> for more information.
- **June 28**—Mayor Sheila Dixon's 2nd Annual 1.5 Mile Walk and New 5K Run. For registration information go to www.charmcityrun.com. For BCHD Team information contact Rianna Brown at rianna.brown@baltimorecity.gov.

Message from the Commissioner



Dear Colleague,

As our year of transition continues, I would like to mention that we have begun to plan for a third all-staff meeting. Our goal is to have the meeting before the end of 2008. We'd like to have accomplished the move to 1001 E. Fayette Street and have a full leadership team of deputy and assistant commissioners. Please send ideas for the meeting to Michelle

Spencer at Michelle.
Spencer@baltimorecity.gov.

The topic of this month's newsletter is home safety. It turns out many problems occur in the home -- from lead poisoning to injuries. The Healthy Homes division has taken on this challenge by adapting its lead program to be more inclusive of other risks in the home. Recently, I brought the leadership team of Healthy Homes to meet with Mayor Sheila Dixon. She was very impressed by the progress the division had made in identifying the problem and cre-

ating a sustainable strategy for addressing it.

The African-American Heritage Festival, taking place June 27 to 29, looks to be a terrific opportunity for health education and opportunity. Please contact Wanda Watts at Wanda.Watts@baltimorecity.gov if you would like to volunteer or want more information.

I hope everyone gets a chance to enjoy warmer weather this summer. Please stay safe!

Employee Spotlight: Healthy Homes

The Healthy Homes Division spotlights Sarah Norman! Sarah joined the Healthy Homes Division in March, 2007 as the Director of Inspections, Case Management and Epidemiology. In this role she has led 20 professionals to develop and demonstrate a healthy homes model for the nation, entailing an expansion of services from a strict lead focus to also include asthma, injury, poisoning, and sudden infant death prevention. The Division's model includes comprehensive healthy homes training, inspections and health assessment surveys, health education, resource and referral development, data management and evaluation. It is now being touted by CDC as a national best practice.

In addition, Sarah has expanded Division partnerships to include nine organizations serving pregnant and postpartum women. Program staff now ensure that rental homes of pregnant women

are in compliance with state lead risk reduction laws and that pregnant women in risky housing have access to Division home visiting services and supports.

Sarah has advanced healthy homes policy by contributing to a new city carbon monoxide bill to prevent carbon monoxide morbidity and mortality threatening many of those whom we serve. She has mentored several students and fellows who have produced publishable reports, critical syntheses of information, and expanded the reach of the Division citywide. Sarah has taken a lead role in writing more than a half dozen grants in the past year, which has led to expansion of resources and productive new partnerships.

She combines deep passion for public service, remarkable drive and hard work, intelligence, and detail orientation. Her contributions will be long lasting.



June is **Home Safety Month**. This month the Home Safety Council highlights the five leading causes of home injury (falls, poisonings, fire and burns, choking/suffocation and drowning). Their "Hands on Home Safety" campaign asks you to take time to follow a few simple steps to create a safer home environment. For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/index.aspx>.

Congratulations!

The Health Department would like to recognize the following employees for their many years—a combined 197—of dedicated service to the health of the residents of Baltimore City. We wish you much success in your retirement!

- Flora Caldwell, 41 Years
- Virginia Sadler, 40 Years
- Geraldine Godsey, 35 Years
- Lorise Jones, 31 Years
- Bhupendra Thakkar, 28 Years
- Anslim Marcano, 22 Years
- Leonard Singleton, 22 Years



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

Medical Assistance Expansion Program Slated to Begin July 1, 2008!

Beginning July 1, 2008, parents and other family caregivers of children earning up to 116% of the FPL will be eligible for the **Medical Assistance for Families Program**. This new program will offer comprehensive health care coverage for all eligible low-income working families with children. Previously these families could

not earn more than 30% of the FPL to be eligible for full Medical Assistance coverage. Starting July 1st a family a four can earn up to \$24,500 a year compared to \$6,362 a year now.

Those parents or caregivers that are currently enrolled in the **Primary Adult Care (PAC)** program will be automatically enrolled in the new program and

keep their current MCO. Please note that more parents and caregivers will qualify for the **Medical Assistance for Families Program** than previously qualified for **PAC**. Income limits for **PAC** for households of more than one are reduced to 100% of FPL but not for the **Medical Assistance for Families Program** - more good news for Baltimore families!

Major TV Ad Campaign on Drugs to Air on WBAL-TV

As part of Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems' relationship with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, WBAL-TV began airing this week a year-long series of 30-second TV commercials calling attention to the need for parents to discuss the dangers of drugs with their children. The spots, which are worth \$150,000 in air time, will be broadcast a total of 1,050 times during the first two weeks of every month from now until June 30, 2009.

WBAL will broadcast the messages from 5 a.m. through 5 p.m. on their regular channel and on their all-digital weather channel (called Weather Plus). The station will also run the campaign on its website, WBALTV.com. Among the programming where the messages will air will be Oprah's show.

The first 20 seconds of the messages were produced pro bono by leading national advertising agencies. The final 10 seconds, which WBAL taped locally, show Mayor Dixon urging parents to talk to their children about drugs and to get more information. The name of BSAS and the BSAS phone number then appears on the screen.

This arrangement is part of a 'cause marketing' effort that BSAS and the Partnership will be pursuing with other local media. BSAS thanks WBAL-TV and the Mayor for their roles in this major effort to reach and teach parents and children about substance abuse.

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

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

Baltimore City Health Department

210 Guilford Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 396-4398
www.baltimorehealth.org

Safe at Home?

Most people spend 90% of their time indoors, with 65% of that at home. "Home" is thought to be a safe haven. Yet, unfortunately, this may reflect a false sense of security. Is my home safe? is a question worth exploring. Sadly, despite the fact that they are preventable, unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death among US children. And, in Maryland, 1 out of every 3 injuries that required hospitalization, occurred in the home.

The top three unintentional injuries occurring at home are falls, poisoning and fires/burns. Through knowledge and behavior modification, unintentional injuries can be avoided. You can help make a difference by taking action to reduce hazards for unintentional injuries in your home. Here are some things you can do...

To Prevent Falls:

- Use nightlights to illuminate hallways and bright lights over staircases and porch ways.
- Have handrails on both sides of the stairs and steps.
- Secure trip hazards such as loose tiles, carpeting or floor stripping. Avoid rugs that can't be kept in place.
- Use a ladder or step-ladder for climbing instead of a stool, chair or other furniture.
- Place grab bars in the tub and shower.
- Secure baby gates and the top and bottom of stairs and window guards on 2nd level windows, if babies or toddlers are present or visit.

To Prevent Poisoning:

- Lock poisons, cleaners, medi-

cines, perfumes and all dangerous items away from children's reach.

- Keep all cleaners in their original containers. Do not mix them together.
- Use medications carefully, follow directions as indicated. Use child restraint lids.
- Install carbon monoxide monitors near sleeping areas.
- Keep the Poison Control Center number posted near all telephones, 1-800-222-1222.

To Prevent Fires and Burns:

- Make sure you have working smoke alarms on every floor, including the basement. Test alarms monthly and replace old batteries.
- Develop a fire escape plan and practice fire drills.
- Never leave a stove unattended while cooking. Keep potholders, curtains, etc. at least 3 ft away from burners.
- Use space heaters in well-ventilated areas and at least 3 ft away from anything that could burn.
- Do not use your oven to heat the home.
- If you smoke, make a practice of smoking only outdoors. Keep matches, lighters and ashtrays out of children's reach.
- Use flameless candles or make sure an adult is present at all times around lit candles.
- Remember to double check that you've turned off all stove burners, ovens, space heaters and candles when you leave a room or go to bed.

To learn more about preventing home-based safety and health hazards, contact the Healthy Homes Division of Baltimore City Health Department at (443) 984-2460.

Save the Date for BARCStoberfest!

Mark your calendars now for BARCS biggest fundraiser of the year! The 4th Annual **BARCStoberfest** will be held on **Saturday, October 18, 2008** in Patterson Park (rain date is October 19). Visit the BARCS website at www.baltimoreanimalshelter.org to learn more about this popular family—and pet—friendly festival and to sign up to be a **sponsor, vendor, volunteer** or to **donate** to the silent auction. Visit the BARCS website to learn more about this fundraiser or email us at info@baltimoreanimalshelter.org.

Changes to Medical Assistance for Family Applicants Ease the Application Process

Also beginning July 1, 2008 it will be easier for families to apply for Medical Assistance! Here are some of the changes!

- A new, shorter Medical Assistance-only application for families, children, and pregnant women
- Apply by mail or fax, no face-to-face interview required
- Apply on-line via the Service Access Information Link (SAIL) system <https://www.marylandsail.org/> (starting 10/1/08)
- No asset limit
- Families can apply at Local Health Departments—Baltimore HealthCare Access in Baltimore City—just like for MCHP!

Call 410-649-0500 for more information about the new program Medical Assistance for Families Program or to learn about other health care options.