

### Karen's Corner



February proved to be a busy month, and it is times like these when I am most thankful for our great employees as well as our state and local partners.

The week of February 16, we experienced record snowfall. On top of that, a train carrying oil derailed, which sparked fires and explosions in Fayette County, leaving many citizens without water and shelter.

In response, DHHR asked people in the area to conserve water while water intakes were shut down. The Governor then activated a State of Emergency in Fayette and Kanawha Counties, which allowed residents to access needed resources.

In coordination with Governor Tomblin's Office, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety, and the U.S. Department of Transportation, we were able to address the situation. Despite the obstacle of snow and ice, organizations and agencies like the U.S. Coast Guard, Red Cross, the West Virginia Air National Guard came together to help the people affected, which demonstrated West Virginia's true strength.

While we hope for calmer months to come, I find comfort in knowing that, with collaboration between state agencies and support from first responders, the state of West Virginia is in good hands.

Remember, "To live greatly, we must develop the capacity to face trouble with courage, disappointment with cheerfulness, and triumph with humility." (Thomas S. Monson)

### Health Officials Share Importance of Heart Disease Awareness

On Friday, February 27, health officials with DHHR and Thomas Memorial Hospital reminded residents about the importance of cardiovascular disease during an awareness event hosted by Thomas Memorial Hospital as part of American Heart Month.

"West Virginia leads the nation for the highest prevalence of cardiovascular disease and heart attacks," said DHHR Cabinet Secretary Karen L. Bowling. "We joined our public and private partners to underscore the preventive measures that can be taken to turn these statistics around as well as highlight the resources available. It is my hope that events like these will encourage all West Virginians to adopt a heart healthy lifestyle."

The term "heart disease" refers to several types of heart conditions. The most common type in the United States is coronary artery disease, which can cause heart attack, angina, heart failure and arrhythmias. While most of these conditions are preventable, heart disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women.

"We, at Thomas Memorial, believe that education is key to knowing how to prevent heart disease. Every month we host free health screenings so you can know your numbers and the steps to take to prevent heart disease," said Dan Lauffer, COO of Thomas Health System.

"Prevention starts with knowing the risk factors. For heart disease, these include tobacco use, physical inactivity, family history, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity," said Dr. Rahul Gupta, State Health Officer and Commissioner for the Bureau for Public Health.



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## HEALTH OFFICIALS SHARE IMPORTANCE OF HEART DISEASE AWARENESS, *continued*

Dr. Kishore Challa, cardiologist at Thomas Memorial Hospital, recommends the following preventive measures to reduce the risk of heart disease:

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly.
- Do not smoke.
- Limit alcohol use.

To learn more about heart disease and DHHR's Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease (HPCD), visit <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/hpcd>, stop by your local health department or call 304-356-4193.

### Employee Spotlight: Allie Clay

Allie Clay, Program Manager for the Bureau for Medical Services' Hospice, Home Health & Private Duty Nursing Programs, began coordinating the BMS wellness program in 2011. While BMS is the smallest bureau of the Department's bureaus, it has one of the most vibrant and creative employee wellness programs. Allie's ideas and energy inspire participation from all levels within her bureau and throughout the Diamond Building.



Allie believes worksite wellness is important. "We are examples of health and wellness because we are the faces of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. We can be influential to members of our communities, which allow us to share health and wellness education to our communities and hopefully, encourage them to lead a healthy lifestyle as well," she explains. "Educating your staff and promoting a healthy lifestyle can result in illness prevention, a decrease in using sick leave and higher work productivity."

To encourage participation, Allie utilizes a variety of informational tools: a wellness section on the BMS SharePoint page, bureau-wide emails, a Smart Board, a health and wellness bulletin board and the BMS newsletter. In addition to promoting wellness activities, she also uses these tools to send reminders of events and opportunities. BMS leadership strongly supports wellness activities, encouraging participation by all staff members and participating themselves when schedules permit.

Allie offers a wide-range of wellness opportunities throughout the year, including art-based stress relief programs, pet therapy, consumer credit and budget planning. She utilizes opportunities from PEIA including Back on Path, H2O to Go, Re-Think Your Drink, Walk 100 Miles in 100 Days and the Stress Less with Mindfulness series. A favorite activity among BMS staff is the Biggest Loser, which has been a repeated due to its popularity. During Biggest Loser contests, staff members learn about healthy eating, weight management and healthy recipes, and build a support team to encourage each other.

When asked for ideas on how to increase wellness throughout DHHR, Allie noted education and encouragement with positive reinforcement is the main key to have successful health and wellness programs.

### DHHR to Launch Television Show



In March 2015, DHHR will begin taping a new public access channel television show hosted by Secretary Karen L. Bowling. "The State of Health" will air through the West Virginia Library Commission's Library Television Network, reaching cable television viewers statewide.

"The work of the Department is diverse and provides necessary services for all West Virginians," said Secretary Bowling. "I am excited to have this opportunity to share the good things we do and increase the number of citizens who know about and utilize our services."

"The State of Health" will air new episodes monthly and feature information on each of the Department's Bureaus and offices. This is the first time a DHHR Cabinet Secretary has hosted a regular broadcast.

To suggest a topic for a future episode, email [DHHRCommunications@wv.gov](mailto:DHHRCommunications@wv.gov).

