

### Karen's Corner



It is hard to believe that a year has passed since I was appointed Cabinet Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Resources. In that time, we have achieved great things together and I am both excited and encouraged by the opportunity to continue setting and reaching our goals for a healthier West Virginia.

Among the last 12 months' notable achievements is the Three Branch Institute on Child Social and Emotional Well-Being. This initiative to improve foster care has been made possible by the many talented DHHR employees serving and leading these workgroups, which examine issues such as access to mental and behavioral health care services and appropriate use of medications. In this same thread, the Bureau for Children and Families has applied for a demonstration project, Safe at Home West Virginia, which aims to reduce the number of children in out-of-home and congregate care. In addition, we are implementing a more standard approach for our abuse and neglect calls with a centralized DHHR hotline beginning July 1.

We've also made great progress with regard to Medicaid. Not only have we seen an increase in Medicaid expansion enrollment to nearly 130,000, we've started various pilot projects that promote the health and well-being of our Medicaid recipients.

As we have strived to improve the lives of West Virginians, we've realized we must also strive to improve our agency. With that as our focus, we have provided actionable responses to the Public Works report, which included the recommendation to reorganize DHHR bureaus into strategic groups supported by common resources. In the effort to maximize efficiency, we have reworked the administrative structure to establish three deputies—the Deputy of Health Services, the Deputy of Human Services, and the Deputy of Public Insurance and Strategic Planning. We also established the Health Improvement Office, which works with our public and private stakeholders to create ways to improve the state's healthcare system as part of the Health Innovation Collaborative. In addition, we named a director for the Office of Minority Health, who will coordinate health promotion activities with other bureaus for public health. These activities will be related to disease prevention, health promotion, service delivery and research through analysis of existing initiatives and programs to supplement their responsiveness and applicability to vulnerable populations. The Office of Minority Health is currently working with institutions such as West Virginia State University to create tobacco-free Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Needless to say, we are not finished yet. The people of West Virginia need our guidance and we have an obligation to create programs that measure outcomes and create results that will move the needle in a positive direction to improve the overall health and well-being of our population. Over the course of my journey as Secretary, I've had the opportunity to travel to many of our DHHR county offices and facilities, and by the end of the summer, I hope to have completed my visits until the next round. Together, we can, and will, do great things!

### Joan Hudnall Receives 2014 Ron Nestor Award

Joan Hudnall, Adult Protective Service Supervisor for Nicholas, Webster, Braxton, and Clay counties, is the recipient of the 2014 Ronald Nestor Award. The award was presented to Joan on June 17 at the West Virginia World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Charleston.

The Ronald Nestor Award recognizes individuals who raise awareness and advocate for ending elder abuse. Ron Nestor, an advocate for social work for over 45 years and winner of the Anita S. Harbert Outstanding Achievement in Aging Award, was the first Director of Adult Services at DHHR.

Joan began her career with DHHR in 1977. She has worked in foster care, child protective services, income maintenance, and as a homefinder for foster care, adult family care, and adoptive homes. In 1987, Joan began carrying a caseload of adult family care clients and completing adult protective service investigations, in addition to her homefinding duties. In 1990, she became the social service supervisor for adult services, as well as supervising day care in Nicholas, Webster, Braxton, and Clay counties.

Joan and her husband Mark have been married for 36 years. They met through DHHR, both working as social workers. Joan and Mark have two grown children, Lauren and Mark David. During her free time, Joan enjoys flower gardening and reading.

When asked about her career with DHHR, Joan stated, "I like being able to assist adults in accessing services that enable them to remain in their homes and to improve their quality of life. I like advocating for vulnerable adults who don't have a voice. I like assisting, guiding, and coaching my staff to enable them to serve our customers with the end result of improving the quality of life for our customers."

Thank you, Joan, for your many years of service to DHHR, the people of West Virginia, and to the cause of Elder Abuse Awareness.



## DHHR Team Enters YMCA Corporate Cup



DHHR volleyball team

The 2014 YMCA Corporate Cup kicked off during the first week of June and Team DHHR is on the scoreboard! Congratulations to our Charleston employees who represented the Department. Pictured are Paul Shannon, Joshua VanBibber, Lindsay Kuncher, Shovik Sengupta, Rachel Underhill, Brittany Thomas (spouse of Christopher Thomas), Angela King, and Yujun Du, members of the DHHR volleyball team. At our print deadline, the Department's standings include a first place finish in billiards, third in the hoop shoot and women's table tennis, fourth in volleyball, fifth in putt-putt and eighth in men's table tennis. Team results are available on the YMCA Corporate Cup Facebook page.

## Lincoln County DHHR office joins Relay for Life

The third annual Lincoln County Relay for Life was held at the Lincoln Primary Care Center in Hamlin on Friday, May 16. The Lincoln County DHHR office team, "New River Electric Zapping Out Cancer," was led by office receptionist Jeanette Johnson and sponsored by New River Electrical Corporation. The DHHR team raised \$1,600 through employee contributions, a basket raffle, t-shirt sales and donations from New River Electrical and Performance Fiberglass. A total of \$2,700 was raised by the 55 member team, earning the recognition of fourth highest fundraiser for the 2014 Lincoln County Relay for Life.

The DHHR team sold smoked barbeque at the Relay for Life, won the best campsite award for the third year in a row, and had a first place finish in the boxcar race. The Relay for Life has become a family event for the Lincoln County office that employees look forward to each spring.

"I am delighted that our Lincoln County office makes a positive impact in this important community event," said Cabinet Secretary

Karen L. Bowling, who learned about the team's efforts on her visit to the office in June. "I believe the strength of DHHR is in our ability to work collaboratively to face challenges, and this is an example of our employees taking this vision to another level."



Lincoln County DHHR office team

The team also participated in "Paint the Town Purple" by decorating with purple banners, ribbons, flowers and signs. Luminary bags to remember and honor those with cancer were sold and lighted at the event.

## Employee Spotlight: Gary Hess



Gary Hess, Programmer/Analyst for the Families and Children Tracking System (FACTS) within the Office of Management Information Systems (MIS), has been an integral part of technology at DHHR for almost 19 years. He's worked on both the health and human services side and is well respected for his expertise and demeanor. "His base of knowledge of FACTS itself as well as the processes and people associated with it is indispensable. No one ever refers to him as the "Walking Wiki" but now

that I've thought of it, we're going to start," commented Gary's supervisor, Jeff Johnson.

The FACTS system is a complicated one, with numerous databases, client/server applications, web services/applications and batch programs, all running 24/7, 365 days a year. FACTS was originally built primarily to manage case information for child and adult protective services and child care, but interfaces in various ways with many other systems including OSCAR, RAPIDS, the court system, State Police, State Auditor's Office, and federal programs.

Gary acknowledges it's complicated to keep the FACTS system running. "Everything we do is a challenge," he explained. When policies change, the software must, too, and when several programs are working together in this way, problems in one area can quickly affect others. All software changes must be tested, distributed, docu-

mented, and tracked either for auditing purposes or for maintainability. Software must also be updated and upgraded. "Over time, turnover of State employees and contractors can lead to a loss of valuable knowledge, as well," Gary noted. He has invested the majority of his career – 13 years – making the FACTS system work.

Prior to moving to MIS, Gary held two positions in the Bureau for Public Health, working as a Microcomputer Systems Support Specialist for the WV AIDS program and as the Information Systems Coordinator for the Safe Drinking Water Program.

"Gary has a foresight that's not often found in technical people. Never content to solve only the problem in front of him now, he's ever thinking to the problems we'll face in the future and finding ways to mitigate them in the present. Gary is a born analyst and I'm not sure what the project or OMIS would be without him," Jeff noted.

When asked why he likes working for DHHR, Gary explained, "After nearly 19 years, I'm still fascinated by the variety of programs managed by the Department. I think collectively most of what we do as individuals, and even whole programs, goes quietly unrecognized by those outside the Department. But, if we were to stop performing any services or perform them badly, we would suddenly make headlines because we affect so many people and with such vital services. It is a humbling, yet rewarding experience to know you have a positive effect on someone's life.

This summer, Gary is hoping to spend time at the pool with his children and attend a few outdoor music festivals.