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.

continued
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.