

Karen's Corner



June is the start of the summer vacation season and outdoor time, which is why it is important that we take measures to protect ourselves from certain diseases. One such threat is Zika, a virus that is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito, but can also be sexually transmitted or passed from a mother to her fetus. Symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain and pink eye.

Zika is associated with travel to countries where transmission is being reported, including countries in the Caribbean, Central America and South America. Although there have been no confirmed cases of Zika virus transmitted by mosquitoes inside the United States, the types of mosquitoes that can carry the disease live in West Virginia. The CDC reports these types of mosquitoes could travel to more states this summer than previously thought.

While there is no vaccine to prevent Zika virus, you can take steps to protect yourself and your family from mosquito exposure:

- Take extra caution when outside during the day as mosquitoes that carry Zika are primarily daytime biters.
- Use insect repellent with DEET, Picardin or IR3535.
- Wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use screens on windows and doors.
- Take steps to remove pooling water from property where mosquitoes can lay eggs.

In addition to these simple precautionary steps, pregnant women should avoid travel to areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission due to poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of infected mothers. Microcephaly, a condition where a baby is born with a smaller than normal head, has been reported in Brazil and some other countries.

West Virginia's Zika task force is monitoring the situation globally in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other federal partners. The task force is in the process of developing a Zika Action Plan for the state. We're also coordinating with local health departments and the Division of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Protection to ensure we are sharing the latest information. Learn more at <http://dide.wv.gov>.

Sharpe Hospital Honors its Volunteers

"They are love. They are a smile. They ensure I am not forgotten." That's what the patients at William R. Sharpe, Jr. (Sharpe) Hospital said of the hospital's volunteers. Sharpe's volunteer program has been in existence for more than twenty years, providing the opportunity for community members to host special projects and connect with patients at the hospital.

"We have quality volunteers who dedicate many hours to improving and enriching the lives of our patients," said Sharpe CEO Pat Ryan.

To honor the many volunteers who make an immeasurable impact through the giving of their time, Sharpe hosted a banquet on April 14, 2016, as part of National Volunteer Appreciation Week, where volunteers were welcomed by Pat and other members of the hospital administration.

During the event, volunteers received certificates and awards of recognition for their service to others. Tote bags and other tokens of appreciation were also provided. Among those recognized was the hospital's longest serving volunteer, Bell Butcher. Bell is a founding member of The Friends Auxiliary of Sharpe Hospital and

Sharpe Hospital, *continued*

volunteers every Monday in The Friends Auxiliary Gift Shop. Bell retired from Weston State Hospital and has been dedicated to raising funds and awareness to support individuals struggling with mental health symptoms.

“There are some people you meet that make a profound impression on you. They shape who you are and the kind of leader you become,” stated Pat. “Bell is that kind of person. She has dedicated her life to serving others, and we are fortunate to have her as part of our team.”

Also recognized at the banquet was Alice Ferrell. Alice volunteers twice a week and serves in many capacities. Alice participates as a literacy mentor, gift shop volunteer, and patient activity volunteer on a weekly basis. “Alice has been an integral part of implementing new volunteer opportunities,” said Sharpe Volunteer Services Coordinator Krista Adkins. “I hope that all of our volunteers understand that we deeply appreciate everything they do.”

As volunteers enjoyed a catered lunch, Pat concluded, “It is clear that volunteering is a powerful experience. I have been impressed with the quality of our volunteer program and look forward to its growth and expansion.”

For more information on how to join the William R. Sharpe, Jr. Hospital volunteer family, please contact Krista Adkins, William R. Sharpe, Jr. Hospital Volunteer Services Coordinator, at 304-269-1210 Ext. 339 or Krista.D.Adkins@wv.gov.



Pat presented Bell with a certificate in honor of her many years of service.

Successful First Year for the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit Legal Division



Richelle Garlow and Michael Malone

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Inspector General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) recently celebrated the one-year mark of its newly-implemented legal division, with several notable accomplishments by its attorneys, Richelle Garlow and Michael Malone.

With a focus on civil litigation, lead attorney and MFCU Deputy Director, Richelle Garlow has successfully reached settlements in eight false claims cases since joining the legal team, including the first-ever civil law suit filed by the unit. These state-level settlements are the first of their kind by the agency.

Staff attorney Michael Malone specializes in criminal cases. In another first for MFCU, Michael has been appointed to act as special assistant prosecuting attorney in the prosecution of Medicaid fraud cases in multiple counties. Recent successes include a multi-count felony conviction relating to the financial exploitation of several nursing home residents in Randolph County.

“I am very proud of the exceptional work of MFCU’s Legal Division,” said Inspector General Kathy Lawson. “Since joining the Unit, Richelle and Michael have demonstrated an amazing commitment to protecting the state from healthcare fraud and abuse, and I look forward to this team achieving continued successes for West Virginia.”

Under state and federal statutory authority, the MFCU is charged with investigating and prosecuting healthcare fraud committed against the Medicaid program, fraud in the administration of the program, and the criminal abuse or neglect of patients in healthcare facilities and board and care homes. To report these crimes, please call 1-888-FRAUD-WV or 304-558-1858, or email MFCU@wv.gov.

