KENTUCKY
CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
CHFS FOCUS
February 5, 2007

Employee Profile: Regina Long, TB Control Program

Regina Long is the office support assistant in the Kentucky TB Control Program. She has been with the TB Control Program since May 1, 2006.

How does your job allow you to impact the lives of your fellow Kentuckians?

My job provides me the opportunity to impact the lives of my fellow Kentuckians through working with local health departments to track and monitor patients with Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI). LTBI is not TB disease and is not contagious. However, it can progress to TB disease, which is contagious and can be fatal if not treated properly. With the increasing number of immigrants in America, it is crucial to closely monitor LTBI patients and ensure they continue to take a complete regimen of tuberculosis medication. If LTBI progresses to TB disease, and if a patient becomes recalcitrant, or non-compliant, the patient can become drug resistant, which is an increasing public health threat. In the past five years, immigration in America has increased by approximately 500 percent. You can see the impact it would have on Kentucky (as well as America) if LTBI were left unchecked.

What's the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is helping others. I take pride in the fact that I am working toward helping our community and the state of Kentucky regarding the treatment and control of tuberculosis.

What is something interesting about your job that most people wouldn't know?

Because of the dedication to TB control and prevention from local health departments and TB staff, Kentucky has seen a decrease in confirmed TB cases every year since 2001.

Also, the Kentucky TB Control Program has been recognized both regionally and nationally for its conscientiousness in meeting crucial objectives and deadlines.

What are your interests outside of work?

My main interest outside of work would definitely have to be my wonderful daughter, Ashley. She keeps me busy! My schedule is filled with her basketball practices, games, and running here, there and everywhere. I'm sure all parents can relate to the amount of running around we do for our kids. But the truth of the matter is, I love it and wouldn't want it any other way. I love going to her games and cheering my heart out from the bleachers. I am her No. 1 fan. She keeps me grounded and has helped me grow into the person I want to be, and for that I am thankful and blessed.

I could not complete this form without mentioning that, whether at work or not, I am also a No. 1 fan of God. He is the rock on which I stand and without his grace I would have nothing. I am an active church

member at Faith Baptist Church in Frankfort and love working with the children there. I love kids and am a big kid at heart. That love is what prompted me to establish the Kentucky TB Control Program's Inaugural "Warming Hearts & Feeding Souls" Mitten and Food Tree at Christmas. My goal for this tree was to gather as many mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, canned goods and other non-perishable food items as possible to ensure the warming of hearts and feeding of souls this past Christmas season. Contributions were slow at first, but I did not give up on the goodwill of my co-workers in Epidemiology and Health Planning. By the end of the announced deadline, the small mitten and food tree was joyfully toppling over with donations. My entire back seat and trunk of my car were filled. These charitable donations were taken to and appreciated by Frankfort's Soup Kitchen. I would like to recognize and praise my co-workers for their generous donations and loving hearts. Their generosity was greatly appreciated. I am hopeful for even bigger and better things for 2007's "Warming Hearts & Feeding Souls" Mitten/Food tree.

What were your New Year's resolutions and have you stuck to them?

My 2007 New Year's resolution is to live a healthier life. I am working hard and sticking to it so far, but sometimes a girl has to have some chocolate!

Colleagues Recognize Registered Sanitarian for Outstanding Work

Colleagues have honored Kathy Fowler, a registered sanitarian in the Department for Public Health, for outstanding work in the field of environmental health inspections and public safety.

The honor was presented during the KAMFES (Kentucky Association of Milk and Food Environmental Sanitarians) conference Jan. 23-35 at the Hyatt Regency in Lexington. Fowler serves as environmental health inspection program evaluator in DPH's Food Safety Branch. She has been a registered sanitarian for 19 years.

"I really was surprised," said Fowler, a Taylorsville native who now lives in London. "I was sitting there (at the conference), wondering who it was when it finally dawned on me they were talking about me. I was really appreciative and pleasantly surprised when my name was called."

The Public Health staff member began her career with the Jefferson County Public Health Department in May 1987 and later spent 11 years at the Lincoln Trail District Health Department. She has worked the past six years with the Food Safety Branch in Frankfort, but spends her time training environmental health inspectors in the field.

Fowler works out of her home, consulting with local health departments on food and environmental safety issues in 36 eastern and central Kentucky counties.

"Ms. Fowler has consistently played a key role as an environmental health trainer, while also exhibiting outstanding and unwavering professionalism," wrote her colleague, Mark Reed, in Fowler's nomination letter.
Reed strongly emphasized Fowler's hard work to provide training to those working in the food safety branch, where Fowler has served as chairperson for the Retail Food Seminar since 2000. In addition, she has played a hands-on role in providing continuing education training for hundreds of environmental/public health professionals in nearly every county in the Commonwealth.

Fowler, a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University, also was recognized for her work in the central office, such as coordinating temporary food service training presented at the Kentucky State Fair.

"Additionally," Reed said, "Kathy has played an instrumental role in the education of new environmentalists and food safety professionals through her service as an instructor for the Food Safety Branch's Core Training program. In this capacity, she has positively influenced well over 100 new environmentalists who have witnessed several of her core training presentations."

Looking back on the nearly two decades she has spent in public health, Fowler said her career choice was indeed the right one.
"I sort of stumbled into environmental public health," she said. "It's been something that I loved and it's a way you can contribute to your community. It's more than a job. It is a career - but it's also a passion. I've really enjoyed it – all 20 years."

Deborah Anderson Appointed Commissioner

Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell has announced the appointment of Deborah Anderson as commissioner of the newly created Department for Aging and Independent Living.

The department focuses on serving the needs and enhancing the independent living opportunities of Kentucky's elders and people with physical disabilities and replaces the former Division of Aging Services.

"I am honored to have this opportunity to continue to work on behalf of Kentucky's elderly residents and individuals with disabilities," Anderson said. "Governor Fletcher's vision has opened doors to many opportunities and initiatives for Kentucky's aging and disabled populations. This is a very exciting time and I look forward to continuing our work to improve not only the quality of care for these individuals, but also their quality of life."

Anderson has more than 20 years of experience in the mental health, brain injuries, mental retardation and aging fields. A career CHFS employee, she most recently served as a member of the secretary's executive policy staff and led the Kentucky Long Term Living Initiative to develop a system of care for the elderly and people with disabilities.

Anderson also was among the architects of the state Medicaid modernization effort, KyHealth Choices. During the course of her career, she has earned the respect and admiration of aging and disabilities advocates and constituent organizations and is a certified mediator through the Justice Center of Atlanta.

A former case manager and journalist, Anderson has degrees in psychology and journalism. She is nationally recognized for her work on behalf of families of children with emotional disabilities and is co-founder of the Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children.

A resident of Winchester, Anderson and her husband, Bev, have two daughters.

Exercise Focused on School Closings as Countermeasure to Pandemic Flu

By Barbara Fox

If an outbreak of pandemic influenza were to occur and citizens of Kentucky became ill, who would make the decision to close schools in affected areas of the state? What information would be needed to close schools and where will that information be coming from? Will local daycare centers and childcare settings also be closed? What implications would arise from making the decision to close them?

These were some of the questions that approximately 80 people were faced with during a pandemic influenza tabletop exercise that focused on school closings. The exercise was held Jan. 31 at the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort. Hosted by the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH), the exercise was a requirement under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) pandemic influenza grant guidance and was designed to be a catalyst for addressing awareness, planning and preparedness activities for school systems in the event of a flu pandemic.

"Participation in this exercise was critical to ensuring the preparedness of our state school systems in the event of an influenza pandemic," said William D. Hacker, M.D., commissioner for public health and acting undersecretary for health. "Planning, preparing and practicing school closures may be an effective measure in decreasing the spread of influenza virus and reducing the overall magnitude of disease in a particular community."

The exercise scenario focused on human-to-human transfer of a new flu virus in several Asian countries, with the expectation that it will enter the continental United States within a month's time span. Exercise participants discussed the possible use of non-pharmaceutical countermeasures, including voluntary isolation and quarantine, school closings, cancellation of large public gatherings and proper hygiene measures such as hand washing and cough etiquette.

State agencies that participated in the exercise with DPH and the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS) include: Kentucky Association of School Administrators; Kentucky Association of School Boards; Kentucky Department of Education; Kentucky Division of Emergency Management; Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet; Jefferson County public and private schools; Woodford County public schools; Louisville Metro Health Department; and Woodford County Health Department.

Living Well: Self-Efficacy and Exercise Adherence

By Kris Hayslett

Fitness facilities all over the nation have seen a substantial increase in usage, as well as in the number of new members. However, only 50 percent of those paying for a membership will stick with exercise for six months or longer.

A financial commitment does not always reflect our personal long-term dedication. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that all adults should do 30 minutes of moderate intensity movement 5 or more days per week. For beginners, this recommendation may be a little overwhelming.

The key to adopting these recommendations is not just increasing physical activity, but also behavior modification.

Self-efficacy is a necessary component to successful behavior change. The factor that many people don't think about is a person's perception of his or her own ability to perform a given task – the definition of self-efficacy.

For example, if you have exercised in the past but have not kept up with it lately, you would probably have high levels of self-efficacy because at some point, you exercised regularly and were successful. On the other hand, if you have never exercised or have had a bad experience, you might have low levels of self-efficacy.

In most cases, people tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy when it comes to doing cardiovascular activities and lower levels of self-efficacy toward weight machines or free weights. People tend to choose walking, running, swimming or biking for cardiovascular fitness. These are all activities that most of us have been exposed to at some point during life and feel fairly comfortable doing.

People who have high exercise self-efficacy are confident they:

- Can perform exercise techniques and recommendations
- Have the ability to find time to for physical activity
- Have access to exercise facilities or classes

If you do not fall into this category, the good news is that self-efficacy can be elevated in the following ways:

- Hands-on training
- Having role models
- Receiving positive feedback about progress
- Attaching an emotional tie to physical activity

If you are just starting to exercise, recognize that you may need assistance to get you going. Instead of walking into a fitness facility and feeling intimidated, find a professional who will walk you through all

the machines and equipment, showing you the proper technique and usage. Many fitness facilities will offer new members an orientation session so that participants are better acquainted with the equipment. The more you know, the more comfortable you will feel.

Look for role models who have successfully completed the behavior change and added physical activity into their lifestyle. Take note of how much better they feel and how they have fit exercise in their schedule. If your peers or co-workers can do this, so can you.

Seek support from your family, friends and fitness professionals. When you accomplish fitness goals, make sure that you receive positive feedback for your progress.

The emotional tie to exercise is your expectations of your quality of life. We all know there are benefits of exercise, but now lets apply it directly to you. Everyone has a list of things that they value or hope to do; some would include enjoying family, spending time with friends or traveling.

Now look at some of the health risks involved with leading a sedentary lifestyle and see if your list can be fulfilled the way you would like:

- Heart disease/stroke
- Type 2 diabetes
- Osteoporosis
- Some forms of cancer
- Obesity

Some of these health risks do not become evident immediately, but their effects will gradually become more obvious and may hinder your plans for the future.

Physical activity has so many positive outcomes, from enhanced health to improved body satisfaction. If you have attempted exercise and failed, change your approach to exercise and increase your self-confidence and your self-perception of what you can do. The elevation in your exercise self-efficacy will determine your success and behavior changes toward incorporating physical activity into your lifestyle.

Employee Satisfaction Survey Delayed

To allow the Cabinet to focus on the legislative session, the Employee Satisfaction Survey is now scheduled to occur May 9-23. The Office of Human Resource Management is working with the Office of Information Technology to complete the planning process and to design reports to display findings to all levels of the organization.

Please contact Jean.Kendell@ky.gov with any questions.

Click on the OHRM Intranet site to view the 2005 ESS results.

DCBS Needs Foster and Adoptive Parents

By Anya Armes Weber

Foster and adoptive parents who work through the Department for Community Based Services can receive bonuses for recruiting interested families.

Cabinet employees who are foster or adoptive parents are eligible.

DCBS needs more families to give homes to the more than 7,000 children who are in state care.

Current foster and adoptive families can earn a $100 bonus for each of their first two referred families who are approved. A $150 bonus may be awarded for the third and fourth families. And a $200 award is made for the fifth and sixth families who are referred and approved. A bonus of $250 is given for subsequent families who are referred and approved.

For more information on foster care and adoption, log on to chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dpp/ or call (800) 928-4303.

CHFS Focus Health Tip

Feel Better – Take the Sleep Challenge

According to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), an astonishing 70 million Americans experience sleep problems that impact relationships, health, productivity at work and even driving skills. To combat this growing epidemic, the NSF will launch the NSF Great American Sleep Challenge, a nationwide, online campaign designed to focus America's attention on getting better sleep.

From Feb.5 through March 31, Americans who want to achieve better sleep and improve their overall well-being are encouraged to log on to www.sleepfoundation.org/challenge and sign up. It's easy to participate. All of the tools, which include a questionnaire to set desired sleep goals and a one-week, online journal, are presented in consumer-friendly language. Once the Sleep Challenge is completed, participants will have the ability to assess their sleep needs and be one step closer to feeling refreshed, rejuvenated and ready to go. And, by participating, all entrants qualify to win "dreamy" sleep-related prizes.

In the meantime, here are some tips from the NSF to help you get better sleep:

- Maintain a regular bed and wake time schedule, including weekends.
- Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine, such as soaking in a hot bath or hot tub and then reading a book or listening to soothing music.
- Create a sleep-conducive environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.
- Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.
- Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before your regular bedtime.
- Exercise regularly. It is best to complete your workout at least a few hours before bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine (e.g. coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate) close to bedtime. It can keep you awake.

- Avoid nicotine (e.g. cigarettes, tobacco products). Used close to bedtime, it can lead to poor sleep.
- Avoid alcohol close to bedtime.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

The "winter blues" are a real problem for many people and can make work more difficult. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a mood disorder associated with the lack of natural light during the winter months. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) estimates that between 10 and 20 percent of Americans suffer from mild symptoms of depression during this time.

Symptoms can include excessive sleeping, difficulty staying awake, fatigue, weight gain, depression and irritability.

The APA suggests that added exposure to the sun can help those who may be suffering from SAD. Bundle up and take a long walk outside during a break or arrange your office so you have greater exposure to the sun during the day. Take advantage of the sunlight by spending time outside after work, too.

See your doctor if you think you may need treatment.