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**Employee Profile: Rebecca Gillis, K HELPS**

Rebecca Rogers Gillis, Pandemic Influenza/Exercise/Volunteer Coordinator in the Department for Public Health. Gillis has worked with DPH for nearly two years. Before that she spent two and a half years with a local health department.

**How does your job allow you to impact the lives of your fellow Kentuckians? What's the best part of your job?**

Most of us have the desire to help when we see the images of something as devastating as Hurricane Katrina but few of us take the time to be ready to respond. Some of the programs I am involved with will enable thousands of Kentuckians to take the necessary steps to be able to help. Spontaneous, untrained, unaffiliated volunteers are the last thing that emergency responders need. We want to be able to train volunteers and other teams to understand their role in a response and be ready to assist.

The new program called Kentucky Health Emergency Listing of Professionals for Surge (K HELPS) will be invaluable to public health preparedness during a disaster. This is a program that will allow volunteers and others to register online, be credentialed and trained so that they could be utilized by public health during a disaster. Because of the programs that public health is tasked to manage such as the Strategic National Stockpile, it is necessary that we have trained, credentialed volunteers and teams ready to respond when a disaster or large-scale emergency occurs.

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

The Public Health Preparedness Branch has been working closely with other public health officials from FEMA region IV, which includes the southeast states. One of the main projects we

have been working on is team typing. We are working to standardize health response teams. The goal is for Kentucky's teams to be trained at the same level as other states so that if/when another state, like Florida, requests help, they know the capabilities of the response team. This will be a great opportunity to involve other professionals within the Cabinet in public health preparedness.

**What are your interests outside of work?**

Only recently, since I finished graduate school, have I had much time for recreational activities. My interests outside of work include family, outdoor recreation, gardening and reading. I have been married for about a year and a half. My husband is a teacher. Together, we enjoy outdoor recreation activities like canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, fishing and working to train our English Setter. My husband leads an Outdoor Recreation Club at the high school where he works and I help out with that whenever possible.

I have many other interests and other things I want to learn (such as photography) and do (continuing my education) but haven't yet committed myself.

**Give us your thoughts on the work that you have been doing for K HELPS.**

Pandemic planning is the most difficult thing that I have ever tried to do. When you consider how much of the population could be affected (up to 40 percent) and the amount of time that a pandemic could last (up to two years), it is the worst case scenario for preparedness planning. Fortunately, Kentucky has some strengths as we move forward with pandemic planning. I think our best assets include: a large local health department workforce that is planning at the community level, a strong Division of Communications for effective and efficient

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public information and great advances in information technology and communications.

### **DPH Announces New Volunteer Health Professionals Program**

The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) has announced the creation of the Kentucky Health Emergency Listing of Professionals for Surge (K HELPS) program, a state-based system used for registering medical professionals interested in volunteering for public health emergencies or disasters.

“In the event of a large-scale public health emergency, health and medical systems would be overwhelmed with individuals seeking treatment, and the need to meet this demand would be critical,” said William D. Hacker, M.D., commissioner for public health and acting undersecretary for health at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. “The new K HELPS program will allow public health officials to streamline the registration of health professionals and apply emergency credentialing standards to prospective volunteers.”

“The new K HELPS program was designed to complement existing Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) programs, which are community-based organizations that organize and utilize medical professional volunteers to supplement existing local emergency and public health resources for responding to emergencies,” said Rebecca Gillis, Emergency Operations Planning Coordinator overseeing the K HELPS program in the DPH Preparedness Branch. “Under the new system, K HELPS and local MRC units will work together, reducing the overall manpower required to coordinate the programs. Currently, 110 of 120 counties in Kentucky are covered by an MRC, with most units sponsored by local health departments in conjunction with local emergency management agencies.”

Volunteers can register with K HELPS online at <https://khelps.chfs.ky.gov> and will automatically be assigned to the MRC unit associated with the volunteer’s geographical area. The local MRC unit will complete the approval process by verifying the individual’s license, completing a background check, issuing an identification badge and providing orientation and training. The new system also has the ability to alert volunteers by email, telephone or both. Local MRC units also have the ability to alert and activate volunteers as needed.

A variety of volunteers are being sought to register under the K HELPS program. Current emphasis is being placed on physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, radiological technologists, respiratory therapists and clinical laboratory technologists and technicians.

During Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, approximately 1,400 health and medical professionals registered with the Department for Public Health for volunteer medical support to affected areas in the Gulf Coast.

More information on the K HELPS program is available at: <http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/epi/preparedness/KHELPS.htm>.

### **Strategic Procurement Services Introduces New Purchasing Forms, Approvals Process**

The Office of Contract Oversight, Division of Strategic Procurement Services (DSPA), recently conducted an analysis of the existing approval process for all purchase requests. In efforts to improve the division’s customer service, areas for improvement were identified. Cabinet leadership has approved changes which will be implemented during July.

The primary improvement involves the creation of a new form to replace the current CHFS 156 Purchase Requisition Form. Employees will now

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use the CHFS 96 Purchase Requisition Form. The CHFS 96 is virtually the same as the CHFS 156 with a few exceptions.

First, the requestor is required to obtain all proper approvals for their purchase before submitting the form for approval to DSPS. The employee will be required to follow his or her vertical's pre-determined "path of approval." Once the form has received all proper signatures within the requestor's vertical, it then should be submitted to DSPS for processing. **It is imperative to understand the approval signatures on the purchase requisition do not indicate final approval.** Final approval of the document does not come until DSPS has processed the document in accordance with state purchasing regulations.

Requests for certain items should be routed through other offices before being submitted to DSPS, including:

- Requests for special accommodation (furniture/equipment) should be submitted to the CHFS Office of Human Resource Management, EEO Compliance Branch. The branch will forward the approved requests to the procurement department or will send rejected requests back to the end user.
- Requests for computers, IT contractors and other IT-related items should be submitted via e-mail to the CHFS Office of Information Technology Purchasing Governance Committee at [cfc.otspurchasing@ky.gov](mailto:cfc.otspurchasing@ky.gov) with a hard copy sent to CHFS OIT Purchasing Governance Committee. The committee will forward the approved requests to the procurement office or will send rejected requests back to the end user.
- Requests for printing should be submitted to the Division of Communications Publications Manager. The Publications Manager will submit approved requests

to the procurement office or will send rejected requests back to the end user. Requests for business cards, letterhead, memorabilia and envelopes are exempt from the Division of Communications' review process.

All other requests may be submitted directly to:  
CHFS Office of Contract Oversight  
Procurement Process and Administration  
Branch  
275 E. Main Street, 4E-B  
Frankfort, KY 40621

The new form and instructions can be found on the Strategic Procurement Services Intranet site at <http://chfsnet.ky.gov/afa/oco/OCO+Forms.htm>. Look under "Procurement Division." For other details, please check out the Strategic Procurement Services page on the CHFS Intranet site (<http://chfsnet.ky.gov/afa/oco/>). If you need an update on the status of a purchase request previously submitted, send an e-mail to CHFS Procurement Status Request ([Procurement.Request@ky.gov](mailto:Procurement.Request@ky.gov)).

The Procurement Division is excited about being able to streamline its process and serve your needs more efficiently.

Sidebar:

The CHFS 96 Purchase Requisition Form is required for all purchases. The Purchase Justification Memorandum is required for all discretionary purchases greater than \$5,000 or for furniture and equipment purchases (regardless of cost). Requests for non-discretionary items do not require the Purchase Justification Memorandum. Items considered as non-discretionary are as follows:

- Vaccines – STD drugs, condoms, vaccinations, etc.
- Lab supplies – media, reagents, pipettes, etc.

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- Medical Supplies – gloves, bandages, wound care, etc.
- Office Supplies – paper, pens, tape, Post-it notes, etc. This does not apply to office equipment.
- Envelopes – all sizes and types
- Locks and keys
- Food – patient care only
- Clothing – patient clothing only
- Personal Hygiene – razors, deodorant, shave cream, etc.
- PKU – pursuant to KRS, it is mandatory to provide this specialized formula
- Cleaning Supplies – bathroom spray, mops, garbage bags, toilet paper, etc. This does not apply to equipment such as vacuum cleaners, floor buffers, etc.
- Non-professional Service Contracts – janitorial, security guard, pest control, waste management, etc.
- Building Maintenance Supplies – lumber, nuts, bolts, screws, paint, etc. This does not apply to hand or power tools.

## **Living Well: Treat Your Feet**

**By Kris Hayslett, Wellness Coordinator**

Whether doing household chores, yard work or recreational activities, the long days of summer allow us to be more active and on our feet for longer periods of time. At the end of the day many of us will fall into bed with tired aching feet, knees, hips or backs.

Many of these ailments – which may seem chronic – could be resolved simply by purchasing the right type of shoes. Feet are often neglected. We force them into uncomfortable shoes that are appealing to the eyes but not favorable for the proper functioning and comfort of the feet.

Many consumers purchase athletic shoes based on well-known name brands, colors or styles.

Recall your last athletic shoe purchase and see if you purchased them based on any of the following criteria:

- Specific to the type of activity you are going to do
- Price – you thought it was too good of a deal to pass up
- Specifically for a normal (medium) arch
- Specifically for a flat (low) arch
- Specifically for a high arch
- Cushioning
- Heal support
- Comfort only
- Purchased the shoes in your shoe size without trying it on
- Purchased based on it being a well-known brand
- Purchased for the physical appearance only
- Purchased for the materials that made up the shoe (leather, mesh, etc.)

The fact of the matter is, if you don't pay attention to your feet, you could suffer other problems that could lead to injury. So be kind to your feet. Follow some of these tips from the National Institute on Aging when buying your next pair of shoes.

- Get measured – have your foot measured at the shoe store to make sure you are wearing the right size. The best time to measure is at the end of the day when your feet are largest.
- Buy the right style – if you plan to run, look for running shoes; walk, look for walking shoes; or cross-trainers for multi-disciplinary workouts.
- Most of us have one foot that is larger than the other, so fit your shoe to your larger foot.
- Don't select shoes by the size marked inside the shoe but by how the shoe fits your foot.

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- Select a shoe that is shaped like your foot.
- During the fitting process, make sure there is enough space (3/8 to 1/2 inch) for your longest toe at the end of each shoe when you are standing up.
- Make sure the ball of your foot fits comfortably into the widest part of the shoe.
- Don't buy shoes that feel too tight and expect them to stretch to fit.
- Your heel should fit comfortably in the shoe with a minimum amount of slipping - the shoes should not ride up and down on your heel when you walk.
- Walk in the shoes to make sure they fit and feel right. Then take them home and spend some time walking on carpet to make sure the fit is a good one.

### **Delius Named President of Kentucky Public Health Association**

Guy Delius, assistant director of Public Health Protection and Safety in the Department for Public Health, was elected president of the Kentucky Public Health Association (KPHA) for 2007-08.

KPHA is the voice for public health in Kentucky and works with many partners and venues throughout the United States to further improve the health of all Kentuckians. It is the largest public health association in Kentucky, with more than 1,000 members.

"I'm extremely excited to be named president of KPHA, and I'm dedicated to furthering our commitment to protect the well-being of our citizens, and advancing efforts to improve the health of our residents and visitors," said Delius.

Delius formerly served as vice president of KPHA. In June of this year he completed his term as president of the Association of Food and

Drug Officials of the Southern States. Delius also serves on the executive board of the Association of Food and Drug Officials, an international association. Delius is secretary of the Kentucky Registered Sanitarian Examining Committee, which oversees environmental health specialist credentialing and continuing education requirements in Kentucky.

For more information about becoming a member of KPHA, visit [www.kpha.org](http://www.kpha.org), or contact Delius at [guy.delius@ky.gov](mailto:guy.delius@ky.gov).

### **TEN-URE Site Updated**

The state employees TEN-URE organization's Web site has been updated with new officers' listings, photos from the 2007 conference and history of the organization. Visit the site at [www.ten-ure.org](http://www.ten-ure.org).

### **Employee Enrichment**

*By Anya Armes Weber*

Studies show that regularly doing short "mental exercises" can help slow the decline of aging.

These brain workouts may also be beneficial in our daily work lives, as they can help us be more resourceful and attentive to detail.

Here are a few exercises to try.

- Switch the everyday hand you use for guiding your mouse, dialing the phone or using eating utensils.
- Upon meeting someone, try to think of at least one anagram – a word made by rearranging the letters -- of his or her name. Or pick a word you see and quickly think of others that begin with the same two letters.

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- When you walk into a meeting room, try to quickly determine how many people are on your right and your left, as well as the left-right distribution of furniture and other objects.
- A few hours after a meeting, write down the main points of the reports given to see how much you can remember and how well you can express what others have said.