

May 30, 2006

## Read Your Way to Allergy Relief

Even though Lexington, Ky., dropped from No. 1 last year to No. 75 this year on WebMD's list of most allergenic cities, Kentucky's allergy sufferers are still feeling the pain.

That's why the Focus newsletter has put together a list of Web sites that may help you read your way to relief.

Do your eyes burn and itch and swell? Does your nose feel like it's about to run off your face? Is your head hurting? Throat scratchy? Do you feel like you'll never stop sneezing?

Then you're in the same gigantic boat as about 50 million Americans who are allergy sufferers. And you're probably one of about 26 million Americans who suffer from pollen allergies that thrive during spring.

According to the University of Kentucky, allergies are the sixth leading cause of chronic disease in the United States.

The following Web sites offer basic allergy information, including tips to relieve allergy symptoms, and what you should do if your allergies are severe and interfere with your quality of life.

All of the sites are external and will take you outside of Kentucky.gov.

Food and Drug Administration  
[http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1998/298\\_nose.html](http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1998/298_nose.html)

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
<http://www.aaaai.org/patients/publicedmat/tips/outdoorallergens.stm>

WebMD's article and list of most allergenic cities

<http://www.webmd.com/content/article/121/114176.htm>

WebMD – how to conquer allergies  
<http://www.webmd.com/content/article/61/71443.htm>

Pollen.com – sign up for pollen alerts, learn about allergies  
<http://www.pollen.com>

About.com – information about allergies, symptoms and treatments  
<http://allergies.about.com/>

## Caught in the Act

### Donna Reeves: Survivor, Motivator



What started out as a headache quickly turned into a life-threatening situation for Donna Reeves.

Last July, after having a severe headache for several days and having

made three trips to the hospital, doctors discovered Reeves had an aneurysm on her brain.

Surgery was scheduled and on Aug. 3, Reeves underwent brain surgery and had the aneurysm removed.

May 30, 2006

On Sept. 26, Reeves returned to her job as a disability hearing officer in Disability Determinations.

Having survived a silent killer like a brain aneurysm, Reeves knew her health needed to be at the top of her priority list.

“As you probably know, most everyone who has an aneurysm of the brain usually dies or has severe residuals from the rupture,” she said. “I am glad to say that God saw fit to spare me and left me with no residuals other than a scar from surgery on my head and a bad hair-do for a while.”

Reeves said it is especially important to keep her blood pressure in check.

“Now more than ever it is important that I keep my blood pressure under control,” said Reeves. “One way to help keep my blood pressure down is to walk. I do take medication for high blood pressure, however, I am sure I would have to take more if I didn't walk.”

And Reeves isn't taking her health for granted.

“I am so thankful that I am able to walk. When I first started trying to walk after the surgery I could not walk to the secretary's desk without having to rest before returning to my desk,” she said. “Now I can walk two miles.”

“Granted, some days are better than others. I haven't lost many pounds but my stamina has really improved. I also have diet-controlled diabetes and as long as I can walk I am able to keep it under control with no medication.”

Reeves recently participated in the America on the Move program and is singing its praises.

“The America on the Move program is a program that each and every one of us needs to

take advantage of. Reading the messages every day is like having a coach,” she said.

“I have a few walking buddies now,” she said of her participation in AOM. “Some days when I don't want to walk, they will try to motivate me. Other days I do the same for them.”

“I hope that when others see that I can do it, they will see they can do it, too, and start working to improve their health.”

### Secretary's Forums Rescheduled for June

*By Anya Armes Weber*

The final two sessions of the spring Secretary's Forums for Central office staff have been rescheduled for June.

The remaining sessions are targeted according to office. Here are the dates.

11 a.m.-noon, Thursday, June 22 – Human Services and Secretary's Office

11 a.m.-noon, Tuesday, June 27 – Children and Family Services

Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell will discuss his goals for the Cabinet and our customers, undersecretaries will report their office's recent accomplishments and staff will have the opportunity to ask questions.

Staff who have not yet attended a session are invited to either session.

### ABC's 'Primetime' to Feature DCBS Social Services Worker

*By Anya Armes Weber*

Kentucky's foster care program will be featured on a special edition of “Primetime” on ABC this week.

May 30, 2006

At 10 p.m. Thursday, June 1, the news show will focus on Sky Tanghe, a social services worker in Jefferson County's Department for Community Based Services office, and on youth placed at Maryhurst, a Louisville residential home.

Several ABC news programs -- "Good Morning America," "World News Tonight," "20/20," and "Nightline" -- will also spotlight out of home care on June 1 and 2.

The Courier-Journal will run a feature story on foster care June 1.

### **Plan Safely for Summer Picnics**

Picnics are a favorite means of celebration throughout summer, and can be the perfect complement to a family gathering or day at the pool. But with all the fun and activity, it can be easy to forget the simple rules of proper food storage and preparation – especially for the more challenging conditions associated with outdoor dining.

The Department for Public Health wants to help you practice safe food handling techniques when eating outdoors and protect yourself, your family and friends from foodborne illness. If a picnic is in order, it's important to remember to plan ahead. Try to plan the right amount of food to take, so you will not have to worry about storage or the safety of leftovers. Place perishable food in a cooler with ice freezer packs. Replenish ice as it melts.

Also remember to pack safely by placing cold food in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. Don't put the cooler in the trunk; carry it inside an air-conditioned car. At the picnic, keep the cooler in the shade. Keep the lid closed and avoid repeated openings. Use a separate cooler for drinks so the one containing perishable food will not be constantly opened and closed.

In addition, remember these food safety tips:

- Keep hands and utensils clean when preparing food.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten.
- Run firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water.
- Food left out for more than two hours may not be safe. Do not eat anything that has been left out in the hot sun.
- When grilling, cook hamburgers and ribs to 155 degrees Fahrenheit or until the center is no longer pink and the juices run clear. Cook ground poultry to 165 degrees Fahrenheit and poultry parts to 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Reheat precooked meats until steaming hot.
- Do not partially grill extra hamburgers to use later. Once you begin cooking hamburgers by any method, cook until completely done to ensure any bacteria are destroyed.
- When taking foods off the grill, put them on a clean plate. Do not put the cooked items on the same plate that held the raw meat.
- Put leftover foods in the cooler promptly after grilling or serving. Discard any leftovers after one hour of being left outside. If there is still ice in the cooler when you arrive home, the leftovers are safe to eat.

### **eHealth to Participate in National Program**

CHFS and the Kentucky e-Health Network Board will participate in a project spearheaded by RTI International, the National Governors Association and the federal Department for Health and Human Services to improve the effectiveness of electronic health information exchange.

The project, the Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration (HISPC), is intended to assess how business policies, practices and state laws related to privacy and security affect the exchange of electronic health information. The overarching goal is to provide a broad assessment of current practices in order to develop a nationwide electronic health information network.

Under the contract, CHFS and the e-Health Board will work collaboratively with the Kentucky Healthcare Infrastructure Authority, a cooperative venture by the University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky.

“In the spirit of Senate Bill 2, the legislation that created the e-Health Network Board, we wanted to bring the best minds from the universities and the Cabinet as well as the private sector together to move forward with this project,” said Governor Fletcher. “By participating, Kentucky will play an important role in improving health outcomes and efficiency on a national level. We’re excited about getting started and moving closer to the goal set forth by President Bush of having the majority of American’s medical records in electronic format by 2014.”

The project will be ongoing from May 2006 to March 2007.

“This project brings many people to the table from academics to health care practitioners to representatives from the legal and insurance fields. It will be a great collaboration,” said CHFS Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell. “Not only will it allow us to advance e-Health in Kentucky, but we will also play a role in informing national efforts.”

### **Hacker to Participate in Tobacco Free Rally**

Kentucky Faith United Against Tobacco Use will hold a news conference at 11 a.m.

Wednesday to illustrate the Kentucky faith community’s support for policies to reduce teen smoking and help smokers end their addiction.

Acting Undersecretary for Health William Hacker, M.D., also will take part in the event, speaking about tobacco use in Kentucky and recent strides to prevent young people from becoming smokers and reducing the rate of smokers in the state.

### **Lunch ‘n Learn: Manage Your Stress**

Stress management is the topic for the next Lunch ‘n Learn program sponsored by the Healthy Lifestyles subcommittee of the Worksite Wellness and Health Promotion Committee.

Linda Proctor, with Long Term Care and Community Alternatives in the Department for Medicaid Services, will lead the session on Friday, June 2, from noon to 1 p.m. in the cafeteria conference room.

CHFS employees are encouraged to bring a healthy lunch to enjoy while learning about the causes of stress and tips for managing the impact of stress on your life.

### **Encourage Participation in the Employee Suggestion System**

#### *Reward Your Employees and Co-Workers*

Take a look at your team’s accomplishments this month.

Did the team come up with ideas that explain how to improve methods, equipment or procedures; reduce time or cost of a work operation; create a safer work environment; increase revenue; or improve relationships with or services for the public?

Then those classified employees have fulfilled the requirements of a suggestion that is eligible for an Employee Suggestion System (ESS)

May 30, 2006

Award, which garners recognition and extra cash for those employees.

It only takes a moment for an employee to submit a suggestion. Go to the [Employee Suggestion System Web site](#) to submit electronically or complete a [P-35 form](#) and submit to Karen McGaughey, Cabinet ESS coordinator.

Visit the [Human Resource Management intranet site](#) for information regarding the ESS system and to access a printable [brochure](#) with fun facts and easy instructions.

Please encourage your team members to send their ideas and suggestions to the Employee Suggestion System. They could be awarded up to \$2,500.

### Employees Raise Funds for March of Dimes

The CHFS Divas are at it again.

After bowling to benefit Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Divas - Roni-Beth Crouch, Yolanda Thomas, Linda Robinson and Patricia Boler - obviously caught the fundraising bug.

The group recently won third place in a local March of Dimes WalkAmerica. WalkAmerica is the March of Dimes biggest fundraiser and supports research and programs to help prevent or treat premature birth, birth defects and other threats to babies' health.

The women, who all work in Information Technology, raised \$320 through their efforts and would like to extend their thanks to their fellow employees who contributed.

### CHFS Focus Health Tip of the Week

*May is Women's Eye Health and Safety Month*

*Submitted by Anne Parr, R.N.*

Much of our information about the world is gathered with our sense of sight. However, many people overlook eye health as part of their regular health routine.

Some eye health statistics:

- Two-thirds of blindness and visual impairment occurs in women.
- Three-quarters of visual impairment is estimated to be preventable or correctable.
- One-third of age-related macular disease and cataracts may be caused by smoking.

Taking care of your eyes and your health is a first step to preventing vision loss from common eye problems. The healthier you are, the better chance you have of avoiding risks to your eyes. You can lower your risk of eye disease and vision loss if you:

- Avoid smoking
- Eat healthy foods
- Stay active
- Control your blood pressure
- Protect your eyes from the sun
- Have your vision checked regularly

### Employee Enrichment

*By Anya Armes Weber*

*Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.*

If it's getting difficult to make it through each workday without encountering at least one hassle, you might need to learn to boost your resilience. Bob Rosner, who offers career advice

May 30, 2006

for [jobjournal.com](http://jobjournal.com), has these suggestions for bouncing back professionally.

**Stay committed.** On the job, give your work your full attention. Even if you have begun to dislike your job, you have to make the best of it. Refocusing your energy might give you new ideas about how to get something accomplished.

**Get control.** Look for opportunities to assert yourself by leading a team effort or solving a problem. You'll feel a stronger sense of power.

**Have friends.** When you support your coworkers, they will return the favor by watching your back.

**Keep laughing.** A sense of humor can get you through the worst of times. Being able to laugh at yourself can ease tension and even help you smile at work again.