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Employee Profile: Melissa Dalton Hopkins

My name is Melissa Dalton Hopkins and I am the social work consultant/health planner for the Kentucky TB Control Program. I have been with the state in one capacity or another since 1994, and with the TB Control Program since 2002.

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

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a threat within Kentucky's communities, the nation and around the world. I feel privileged to be a part of an organization where the purpose is to work toward eliminating this devastating disease. Specifically, I work with local health departments regarding patient services that address the genre of social service needs of TB patients. I also travel to local health departments with a nurse consultant to assess local health department TB Control Programs, offering assistance and recommendations for improvements that meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations. As health planner, I am responsible for coordinating trainings to enhance TB education for our local health department staff. Many times these training sessions are also available to health care providers within the community.



What do you enjoy about the work you do?

I thoroughly enjoy visiting our local health departments. I truly admire the staff within these agencies, and learn so much from my interactions with them. Kentucky is blessed with a group of dedicated and caring staff within its local health departments. As a social worker, I find it is rewarding to be able to provide information for services that are beneficial to patients. In my function as health planner, I enjoy coordinating trainings requested by and beneficial to the health department staff so they are equipped with the most current information regarding treatment and control of TB.

What activities do you participate in outside of work? How do they benefit you?

My faith is an important part of my life. Attending church services regularly helps to rejuvenate my positive outlook. Spending time with my family is also a priority in my life and we travel on weekends many times to visit relatives who live out of town. Also, my children are very involved with their school and sports, and I volunteer as much as

possible. Currently, I am helping to coach my son's under-6 soccer team and I am a parent volunteer at my children's school. I am also working on obtaining a master's in business administration with an emphasis in health care management.

If you were given \$100 and you had to spend it today, what would you spend it on?

If I were given \$100 and had to spend it today I would spend it at the spa. I have discovered that a facial and a pedicure are good for the soul!

If you could live in any city in the world, where would you live and why?

If I could live in any city in the world I would live in Savannah, Ga. I love the city's charm, culture and history, and the fact that it is coastal. The unique shops and antique markets are a plus as well. My family and I have visited there on several occasions and I never grow tired of the sites and sounds of Savannah.

TB Not Just a Problem in the Past

Kentucky below national TB case rate

March 24 is observed as World Tuberculosis (TB) Day to commemorate the date when Robert Koch announced his discovery of the bacillus that causes TB.

It is also a day to recognize the collaborative efforts of all countries involved in fighting TB. Since 1993, TB case rates have been declining in the United States

According to the Kentucky TB Control Program, reported cases of TB have reached an all-time low in 2005, and Kentucky is well below the national TB case rate. This decline in active cases illustrates the hard work and dedication of TB control staff at local health departments.

Consider these facts before brushing the seriousness of TB off as a problem of the past.

- In the late 19th century, TB killed one out of every seven people living in the United States and Europe.
- Among infectious diseases, TB remains the second leading killer of adults in the world today, with more than two million TB-related deaths occurring each year.
- An estimated 10 to 15 million people in the United States are infected with TB.
- People with active TB disease can be treated and cured if medical help is obtained.

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For information on tuberculosis in Kentucky, visit <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/epi/tb.htm>.

Focus on Wellness: Register for America on the Move (for Frankfort staff only)

The CHFS Wellness Committee has launched a new active living, healthy eating campaign called America on the Move (AOM), in partnership with the statewide Wellness Works Campaign and Humana. It's a fun, interactive, online program that motivates you to start moving by increasing your daily steps by 2,000 or more over your current level as well as cutting just 100 calories from your day. This will help you to prevent weight gain and boost your health and vitality. You'll be able to track your steps using the Quick Start Guide or log your healthy eating and active living results online to see your progress each day.



AOM's program is structured in two phases:

- Six-week challenge to help participants get started
- An extended, six-month challenge to help participants continue setting and reaching their active living and healthy eating goals.

Tracking

In both phases, daily physical activity can be tracked with steps and/or minutes of activity. The first day you enter step/minute data is considered your start date. You can register now, but make sure you enter your start date as April 5. You will find it easy to track your steps and/or activity minutes on the AOM Web site. Activity minutes are automatically converted to equivalent steps. Once your start date is activated, you can visit every day or go back and enter data from previous days.

You will also track your progress on one of six famous hiking trails – Alaska Military Highway, Appalachian Trail, Highway 50, Lewis and Clark Trail, China Silk Road, or UK National Trail. Each trail has a specific level of difficulty. Steps and minutes are converted to miles as you trace these historic routes.

Participants will work in teams of six to eight people. Team members will maintain their own personal logs through AOM. Team captains will collect, compile and

report team totals each week. America On The Move Personal Registration Forms are available in the cafeteria and Buster's.

To participate in America On the Move, go to: www.americaonthemove.org
Click "Join Now"
Select "Individual" registration
Registration Code: RCH41118
Complete registration information.

Kentucky Women Invited to Participate in Health Registry

From the University of Kentucky News

The University of Kentucky recently announced the availability of the first statewide registry in the country dedicated to tracking women's health trends.

The Kentucky Women's Health Registry is a project of Leslie J. Crofford, M.D., a UK physician, chief of the Division of Rheumatology and director of the UK Center for the Advancement of Women's Health. During the next 10 years, Crofford will work to collect data from 25,000 Kentucky women.

The registry, which debuted March 1, asks Kentucky women to provide personal health information either through an online fill-in form or by using a mail-in survey. This data will be entered in a database Crofford and her team will use to analyze health concerns facing women across the commonwealth. The registry will track health data and status indicators from women of all ages and races living in every part of Kentucky. Registry participants will receive health information updates and have the opportunity to participate in clinical trials of new therapies for conditions that affect them.

"I feel very passionately that we, as academics, need to be involved at all levels with women in our communities," Crofford said. "I think the Women's Health Registry is going to be an incredibly powerful, critical advance in understanding health issues for women in Kentucky."

A common criticism of medical research is that experiments and trials focus primarily on men, with the assumption that findings also are applicable to women. However, recent research shows that women's bodies function differently and women face many unique health concerns.

Women in Kentucky also may lead lives that involve activities, stress levels, responsibilities, influences and other factors, and experience health issues that differ from those of men, and may differ between women living in

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different regions of the state. Crofford's goal is to understand and address the specific problems facing Kentucky women.

Women may enroll in the Women's Health Registry and take the health survey online at www.kywomensregistry.com. Those without Internet access may obtain a mail-in survey by calling (859) 323-5709 or toll-free (800) 929-2320.

The registry is safe and confidential. Personal information will be shared only with approved medical researchers. Registry members will have the option to be contacted when clinical trials that may interest them become available. Benefits of participation in clinical trials include contact with specialty physicians, access to new medication and alternative therapies, social contact and support systems, monetary compensation for some trials and the satisfaction of knowing that participation benefits future generations of women. Trial participation is strictly voluntary for women who enroll with the registry.

For more information about the UK Center for the Advancement of Women's Health, visit <http://www.mc.uky.edu/womenshealth/> or call (859) 323-3900.

Read Crofford's interview from the March 6 Lexington Herald-Leader:

<http://www.kentucky.com/mld/kentucky/14027700.htm>

Sample Survey Questions

The Kentucky Women's Health Registry survey asks about participants' health histories, current health status and other wellness indicators. Here are some sample questions from the survey:

- What type of medical insurance do you have?
- During the past 30 days, how many days did poor mental or physical health prevent you from doing your usual daily activities, such as self-care, work or recreation?
- Stress can be found both at home and in the workplace, in relationships, child rearing, elder care, health-related, financial and for other reasons. How would you rate the amount of stress you are currently under?
- In the past 12 months, how many times have you been to the doctor, or been admitted to the hospital?
- Have you ever had a mammogram?
- Have you ever had any mental health problem?
- Has there been a period of at least two straight weeks when you have felt little interest or pleasure in doing things?

- Have you ever been exposed to a traumatic event in which you experienced or witnessed actual or threatened death or serious injury that involved intense fear or horror?
- Have you smoked more than 100 cigarettes in your lifetime?
- How old were you when you started smoking?
- Have you ever tried to quit drinking but found that you could not?
- Have you ever been arrested for DUI/DWI?
- Have you ever used marijuana?
- Has an intimate partner hit, kicked, punched or otherwise hurt you?

Awareness Campaign Hits Eastern Kentucky

In an effort to raise awareness about the need for cancer screenings among women, the Department for Public Health is taking part in an awareness campaign targeting nine eastern Kentucky counties with high cervical cancer mortality rates.

Kentucky TEAM UP: Cancer Screening Saves Lives, which formed in September 2003, is conducting the campaign to increase breast and cervical cancer screenings among women who were rarely or never screened in the past. Breathitt, Elliott, Floyd, Johnson, Lawrence, Magoffin, Martin, Powell and Wolfe counties will be targeted. Medicare, Medicaid and state health data are used to determine baseline screening rates in these counties.

After researching model cancer control programs on the Cancer Control PLANET Web site, the group developed the "Wise Eastern Kentucky Women Take Care of Themselves" campaign to promote mammograms and Pap tests throughout the nine target counties. The campaign is doing this in several ways:

- Newspaper, radio and TV ads ran in the spring.
- A media tool kit was given to Cooperative Extension Service (CES) agents in the nine counties. It includes bookmarks, brochures, press releases and other materials that can be tailored with local information.
- Cancer fact sheets, a PowerPoint presentation, and a facilitator's guide were created to help CES agents educate local groups.

Kentucky TEAM UP will evaluate its campaign results in January 2006.

The Kentucky group is part of a national TEAM UP: Cancer Screening Saves Lives project aimed at increasing breast and cervical screening rates in eight states with high mortality rates from these diseases. These are Kentucky,

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Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri and South Carolina.

National TEAM UP partners include the American Cancer Society, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Cancer Institute and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In Kentucky, TEAM UP partners include the Cancer Information Service (CIS), the Cooperative Extension Service both at the University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University, the Kentucky Cancer Program, the Kentucky Women's Cancer Screening Program, the Kentucky River Health Network, the Appalachia Cancer Research Center and Health Care Excel.

Kentucky TEAM UP facilitators are Mid-South CIS Partnership Manager Tami Kelder and Kentucky State University Cooperative Extension Program Health Specialist Vivian Lasley-Bibbs.

UK Social Work School Offers Online Registration for CEU Workshops

By Anya Armes Weber

Social workers, psychologists and others interested in enrolling in continuing education workshops at the University of Kentucky's College of Social Work now can register for its courses online.

The school's Web site, <http://www.uksocialworkonline.com>, offers a link to the registration form, as well as a course schedule. Students can pay by credit card or print a registration form and return it with a check payment. .

All scheduled workshops are approved for continuing education units (CEUs) by the Kentucky Board of Social Work and the Kentucky Board of Psychologists.

Most workshops are downtown in Lexington's Kentucky Utilities Building, 1 Quality St., but several have been added in eastern and northern Kentucky.

For more information about registering, call Erica Bell at (859) 257-7156, or e-mail her at erica.bell@uky.edu.

Focus on Wellness: A Dairy Tale

By Willa Thomas

Three daily servings of dairy have an important function in building strong teeth and bones. Calcium, found in dairy

products, may have a significant role in reducing the risk of hypertension, kidney stones, cardiovascular disease and colon cancer. It may even play a role in weight control. Calcium found naturally occurring in foods seems to have the greatest health benefit, thus making it a "dairy tale come true"!



While calcium is dairy product's biggest claim to fame, it is also an excellent source of vitamin D, vitamin A, potassium, vitamin B12, phosphorus, protein, riboflavin and niacin. Low-fat and fat-free dairy products provide all of these nutrients without adding additional saturated fat, cholesterol and calories to your diet.

When shopping for dairy products, check the label to see the fat content. Look for low-fat and fat-free on the label. For some, it is difficult to make the step from whole (high fat) dairy products to lower fat products. Try gradually reducing the fat in your dairy selections. Start by changing from whole milk to 2 percent milk. After a couple of weeks reduce the fat content by selecting 1 percent milk. Finally, select skim milk. When done gradually, you will trick your taste buds and reduce the saturated fat and cholesterol in your diet. Low-fat and fat-free cheeses and frozen dairy desserts are also available.

Some individuals have trouble getting the nutritional benefits of dairy foods because they are lactose (naturally occurring sugar in milk) intolerant. Yogurt with active cultures, cheese, and lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk and other dairy products make it possible to reap the nutritional benefits without gastrointestinal disturbances. Most of the lactose-reduced or lactose-free dairy products are available in low-fat or fat-free choices.

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 you are having trouble focusing on your work, or your daily tasks seem tedious, you may be in a professional slump. If changing jobs is not an option, you'll need to make some kind of adjustment to boost your productivity and your enthusiasm about going to work. Career advisor Edward Chalmers, who writes for Askmen.com, has this advice for making the most of each workday.

Make a to-do list. Write down your daily tasks and cross them off as you complete them. You'll notice which tasks take longer than others, and you'll have a concrete view of your accomplishments.

Ask for more work. If you finish all you need to do before the end of the day, you may need more challenging responsibilities. Ask a supervisor if you can take on new duties or trade tasks with someone else. Change can be revitalizing.

Volunteer in other areas. Check into work groups that focus on agency wellness, staff recognition or safety. If no such groups exist in your local office, maybe you can create one. These kinds of groups won't just enrich your work life, they can benefit all employees.

Add value to your work. So you are getting your work done, but could you be doing it better? Enhance a report by comparing monthly or yearly data. Ask for training in the latest techniques in your profession. You might save the office time and money by learning something new. Adding value will show your enthusiasm, interest and ability. And it will alleviate your boredom.