

FOCUS

News from and about the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

March 31, 2014



'Faces of HIV/AIDS' exhibit examines journey through words, photography

Visitors to the Health Services Building in Frankfort can view a dramatic photo gallery that focuses on several Kentuckians who have lived with HIV/AIDS.

"The Face of HIV/AIDS in Kentucky" is based around a 2000 photodocumentary project by Peggy Blythe and funded by the Kentucky Department for Public Health with support from the KY HIV/AIDS Planning and Advisory Council and the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department.

Blythe spent many hours in conversation with individuals diagnosed with HIV and/or AIDS. They shared their personal stories and challenges, and more importantly, their courage facing this disease. Their gift has been sharing their journey through words and photography and for this we are humbly grateful. The HIV/AIDS Prevention Program staff is honoring these courageous individuals with a permanent display in the HIV/AIDS Branch.

View the photographs just outside the HIV AIDS Branch office on the second floor of the Health Services Building (2R.)

According to the HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report of June 2013, since the beginning of the epidemic in the early 80s, the majority of HIV cases diagnosed among Kentuckians have been reported among males (7,374 cases,



Above: Crystal and her daughter Erica: "My daughter has a strong will to live and when life gets hard and bad things happen, she comes out fighting. This is what I want people to see in her. I want them to see her strength, not her status." **Left:** "The Face of HIV/AIDS in Kentucky" exhibit in the Health Services Building.

83 percent). More than one-third (35 percent) of cumulative HIV cases in Kentucky were people age 30-39 years at time of diagnosis. People 20-29 years old account for more than a quarter of cumulative infections (30 percent). Children (younger than 13 at diagnosis) and teenagers account for the smallest percentages of cases at less than 5 percent each. Similar results exist among females with HIV.

More females were diagnosed with HIV infection in their 30s (500 cases, 33 percent) than any other decade. The majority of cumulative male HIV infections (65 percent) were reported with MSM as the primary route of exposure. Among women, the majority (52 percent) were exposed through heterosexual contact with a person with HIV or at high risk for HIV contraction, e.g. a person who injects drugs.

Simple rules make email more professional

Email is an important communications tool, but there may be room for improvement in the messages you send. The website emailreplies.com gives more than 30 tips for sending more effective emails. You can see the entire list online, but here are some of the more helpful suggestions.

Be concise. Don't make your message longer than it needs to be. Long emails are more likely to be ignored.

When responding, answer all questions. If you don't, you can expect more emails on the topic. Save more time by preempting further questions.

Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. You will make a bad impression of your agency if you make a mistake. Use spell check before you send.

Use a relevant subject line. Use a subject that is meaningful to the recipient and yourself. This can help the reader prioritize your work and better organize your messages.

Do not overuse the "high importance" option. This can be seen as aggressive. You can mention the importance of the topic in the body of your message.

Do not write in all capital letters. Writing in capitals can seem as if you are shouting in your message. This can be annoying to your reader.

PEAK PERFORMANCE

Anya Armes Weber



Do not overuse "reply to all." Be careful with this one. Only use this function if your message must be seen by each person who received the original mail.

Take care with mass mailings. When you are sending to several recipients, use the BCC field to blind copy everyone or choose a mail merge.

Avoid emoticons and abbreviations. In a professional email, there's just no place for such relaxed language like "BTW" and "LOL."

Read the email before you send it. A lot of people don't bother to read an email before they send it out, as can be seen from the many spelling and grammar mistakes contained in emails. Apart from this, reading your email through the eyes of the recipient will help you send a more effective message and avoid misunderstandings and inappropriate comments.

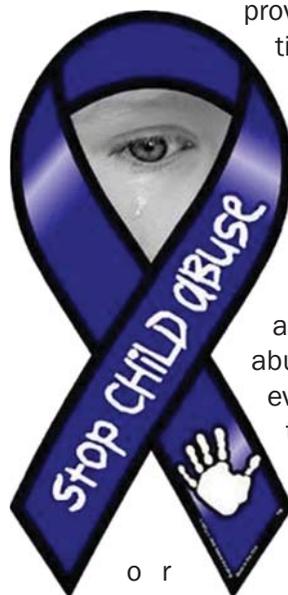
Wear Blue on April 4 to honor Child Abuse Prevention Month

Gov. Steve Beshear has proclaimed April Child Abuse Prevention Month in Kentucky.

Beshear signed the proclamation at the state capitol earlier this month. The governor said that preventing child abuse requires strong partnerships and called upon all Kentuckians to play a part in prevention.

Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky (PCKA), one of the cabinet's community partners, is a statewide nonprofit agency whose mission is to prevent the abuse and neglect of Kentucky's children through its outreach. PCKA's theme for this April is "Commit to Prevent."

PCKA is asking Kentuckians to wear blue or a blue ribbon in Friday, April 4, to raise awareness of child abuse prevention. PCKA offers a toll-free hotline – (800) CHILDREN – that



provides information and referrals to help prevent child abuse. Visit them online at <http://www.pckaky.org>. The site also lists child abuse awareness events across the state. Reporting suspected child abuse or neglect is the law in Kentucky. DCBS has a centralized, easy-to-remember hotline for toll-free reporting: (877) KYSAFE1. Non-emergency reports can also be



Governor Steve Beshear signs a proclamation declaring April Child Abuse Prevention Month.

made at <https://prd.chfs.ky.gov/ReportAbuse/home.aspx>. The website is monitored from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

Learn more about CHFS' child protective services online at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dpp/childsafety.htm>.

CHFS employees take walk to fight tuberculosis

Employees of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services made a statement by using their feet on March 24.

This year's observance of World TB Day included a walk around the CHR Building in Frankfort. The event began with a reading of a proclamation from Gov. Steve Beshear declaring March 24 World TB Day in Kentucky.

This year's theme, "Reach the Three Million: A TB test, treatment and cure for all," refers to one-third of the 9 million people who get sick with TB every year and do not get the TB services they need. Much of this occurs in developing countries where people simply do not have access to care.

"Many people assume that TB is no longer a concern in this country, but we continue to see cases each year – in Kentucky and around the U.S.," said DPH Commissioner Stephanie Mayfield, M.D. "While public health has made great strides in preventing the spread of the disease, our work continues. We hope everyone will take the opportunity on World TB Day to learn more about TB, particularly how it is spread and how it can be treated if someone is exposed to or contracts TB."

The observance was created to commemorate the date in 1882 when Robert Koch announced the discovery of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacterium that causes TB. Among infectious diseases caused by a single agent or pathogen, TB remains the second leading cause of death in adults worldwide second only to HIV-AIDS.

TB is a potentially fatal disease that usually attacks the lungs, but can attack any part of the body, such as the kidneys, spine or brain. The disease is commonly diagnosed in Kentucky, the United States and all over the world.

In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that in 2012, 8.6 million people devel-

oped TB and 1.3 million died from the disease. Meanwhile, the rate of new TB cases has been falling worldwide for about a decade. Globally, the TB mortality rate has fallen by 45 percent since 1990.

"TB remains a public health burden despite significant progress toward elimination," said Mayfield. "In Kentucky, surveillance data show that 78 TB cases were reported in 2012. This is a significant number and further emphasizes the need for continued outreach and education."

TB is a disease that is transmitted person to person through the air when an infectious person coughs, shouts, sneezes, speaks or sings. If not treated properly, TB disease can be fatal.

People who are at high risk for becoming infected with TB include: close contacts of a person with TB; people with poor access to healthcare, such as those who are homeless; people who live or work in high-risk congregate settings (i.e. homeless shelters, nursing homes); intravenous drug users, healthcare workers; infants, children and adolescents exposed to high-risk adults; and people from foreign countries where TB is common.

People with TB are infectious and can give the infection to other people.

Symptoms of TB include a cough lasting greater than three weeks, fever, night sweats, unexplained weight loss, coughing up blood, loss of appetite, chest pain and fatigue. Risk factors for progression to active TB include HIV infection, new TB infection in the last two years, diabetes, immunosuppression, and age, especially children younger than 4 years old.

More information about TB as well as Kentucky's efforts to track and prevent the spread of the disease can be found at <http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/epi/tb.htm>.

DCBS partners with KSBA to present one-day workshop

A one-day workshop on child abuse reporting and intervention resources earlier this month is part of a partnership between the Department for Community Based Services and administrators of Kentucky schools to improve child safety.

DCBS and the Kentucky School Boards Association collaborated to present the workshop to about 120 Kentucky public school staff, including instructors, counselors, administrators and school board members.

Programming included an overview of criteria for reporting child abuse, neglect and dependency; recognition of childhood trauma; and information about new Medicaid funding for community-based behavioral health services.

DCBS Commissioner Teresa James said the workshop was a result of quarterly meetings with both KSBA and Department of Education staff.

"We're going to learn how to communicate better because in the end,

our goals are the same." James said to the workshop audience. "No more are we going to let you silo up and no more are we going to let our agency silo up because when we both run this way our kids get caught in the middle. Their families get caught in the middle."

Program experts from DCBS and the cabinet's Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities and Department for Public Health led the day's sessions.

More than 350,000 Kentuckians enrolled in health coverage through kynect as deadline approaches

75 percent of enrollees didn't have insurance before signing up

More than 350,000 Kentuckians are now enrolled in new healthcare coverage through kynect, and that number is expected to keep growing in the final days of open enrollment.

A preliminary analysis has found that approximately 75 percent of all enrollees report that they did not have insurance before signing up for healthcare coverage through kynect. With approximately 640,000 uninsured Kentuckians prior to the start of open enrollment on Oct. 1, kynect is helping significantly reduce that number and ensure access to quality, affordable care each day.

It's clear that Kentuckians are responding quickly to the deadline for enrollment on March 31, 2014. In the past seven days, more than 4,000 Kentuckians have signed up each day for quality, affordable health insurance.

Individuals who remain uninsured as of April 1, 2014 could face a financial penalty of \$95 or 1 percent of income, whichever is greater. That penalty applies to every uninsured member of a household and increases significantly from year to year.

"Tens of thousands of Kentuckians have taken the initial application steps and know they are eligible for a subsidy to help lower the cost of purchasing health insurance," said Carrie Banahan, executive director of kynect. "In these final days of open enrollment, we strongly encourage those folks to complete their applica-

tions and choose a plan. After March 31, subsidies to help cover the cost of a private health plan won't be available again until the fall enrollment period – and by that point, being without insurance may cost you on your taxes."



Since Jan. 1, 2014, hospitals and other healthcare providers have received more than \$45 million in payments for services provided to individuals newly eligible for Medicaid coverage. These include payments of \$18 million to Kentucky hospitals and \$15 million to Kentucky pharmacies. The vast majority of the nearly 20,000 newly insured patients seen by hospitals and reimbursed for services would have been considered indigent prior to Medicaid expansion and most likely would have been written off as uncompensated charity care by the hospitals.

Gov. Beshear's decision to expand the income eligibility requirement for Medicaid to 138 percent of the federal poverty level has allowed many low-income Kentuckians access to health care, many for the first time. These include individuals making less than \$15,856 a year and families of four with income below \$32,499. These figures don't include reimbursements to healthcare providers

for patients with new private health insurance.

About 1 out of every 13 Kentuckians, or 7.5 percent of the state's population, now has health insurance through kynect.

Nearly half of all kynect enrollees (49 percent) are under the age of 35.

The below statistics reflect activity on kynect as of noon Friday, March 28:

- 350,386 Kentuckians are enrolled in new health coverage
- 280,113 have qualified for Medicaid coverage
- 70,273 have purchased private insurance
- 49 percent of all kynect enrollees are under the age of 35
- 33 percent of all private health plan enrollees are under age 35
- 1.3 million unique visitors viewing 51 million web pages
- 817,626 individuals have conducted preliminary screenings
- 80,536 have been found eligible for a subsidy to purchase a qualified health plan, some have yet to select a plan
- 729,076 calls have been handled by the kynect contact center
- Silver is by far the most popular metal level of private health insurance, with more than 41 percent of plans purchased. Platinum is next with 28 percent, followed by gold at 17 percent and bronze at 11 percent. Catastrophic plans make up less than 2 percent of plans purchased.

Kentuckians can call the kynect call center at 1-855-4kynect or search at kynect.ky.gov to find a kynector or insurance agent who can assist them with enrollment.

National Public Health Week set for April 7-13

The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) is working to promote National Public Health Week, an annual observance that focuses on critical public health issues to raise awareness and help people live longer, healthier lives. This year's theme, "Public Health: Start Here," positions public health professionals as the community's guide through the public health system to help them achieve and maintain better health by effectively navigating the available choices.

"In some way, public health touches everyone, every day in Kentucky," said DPH Commissioner Stephanie Mayfield, M.D. "Public health lays the foundation for a healthier, safe and more secure society by implementing policies, programs and initiatives focused on prevention, outreach, targeted services and education."

Dr. Mayfield emphasized ongoing efforts to expand public health's influence in Kentucky, including work to obtain national accreditation, find opportunities for improvement within existing programs and focus on overall prevention of the various diseases and conditions that affect the health of Kentuckians.

"We know that investing in prevention and public health can make an enormous difference and it's the right direction for Kentucky to move in to address poor health outcomes," said Dr. Mayfield. "Many premature deaths could be prevented by making healthy choices like not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, eating right, staying active, and the getting recommended immunizations and screening tests."

Efforts to promote these public health messages fall in



line with the ongoing work of Gov. Steve Beshear's administration, which last month launched a wide-ranging initiative to improve the health of Kentucky. The program, kyhealthnow, provides a detailed blueprint

of the state's future health and well-being, laying out seven major goals and targeted means of addressing each one.

The American Public Health Association (APHA) serves as the organizer of National Public Health Week and develops a national campaign to educate the public, policymakers and practitioners about issues related to the chosen theme. DPH, the Kentucky Health Department Association, Kentucky Public Health Association and local health departments will be sponsoring community events that promote taking the simple preventive steps that lead to better health and lead to a healthier Kentucky.

For more information about National Public Health Week, visit <http://www.nphw.org/about>. More information about Kentucky public health can be found at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/>. More information on the governor's initiative, kyhealthnow, can be accessed at the program's website, [www.http://kyhealthnow.ky.gov](http://kyhealthnow.ky.gov).

Free skin cancer screenings available at First Onsite Clinics in April

Back by popular demand, free skin cancer screenings will be available in April for all Commonwealth employees. These quick, easy screenings will be conducted by board certified physicians at the First Onsite Employee Care Clinics in Frankfort.

Appointments are recommended, but walk-ins are welcome.

According to the American Cancer Society, more than 76,600 cases of melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer, were diagnosed in

Screening Dates and Times

- Wednesday, April 9
Capitol Annex, 8:30-11:40 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 16
CHFS Building, 1-4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 23
Capitol Plaza Tower, 1-4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 30
Transportation Bldg., 8:30-11:40 a.m.

2013. One in five Americans will develop skin cancer in the course of a lifetime.

Early detection and preventative screenings are strategies outlined in Gov. Steve Beshear's "kyhealthnow" initiative, a plan that seeks to aggressively improve the health habits of all Kentuckians. One goal of the new initiative includes reducing Kentucky cancer deaths by 10 percent.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S. and one of the easiest to prevent. So schedule your screening today!



Focus is a bi-weekly publication of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Produced by the Office of Communications
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