



## 2010 State Report

**State:** Georgia

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### Projects/Issues Addressed This Year:

#### 1. Restructure of Public Health

- In accordance with state statute, effective July 1, 2009, the Division of Public Health moved from the Department of Human Resources to the Department of Community Health, which houses the state Medicaid agency.
- Other Divisions in the former Department of Human Resources were moved to other existing organizations or became separate new organizations.
- The Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response, formerly part of the Division of Public Health, became a separate Division within the Department of Community Health, making it a “sister” Division to Public Health within the same umbrella organization.
- Effective July 1, 2009, Carole Jakeway was appointed Director of Field Operations, responsible for Districts/Counties, Office of Pharmacy and the Office of Nursing, and also continues to serve as Chief Nurse.
- Meshell McCloud, Assistant Chief Nurse, was promoted to Deputy Chief Nurse, responsible for the day-to-day operation and supervision of the Office of Nursing.
- Since the restructure of Public Health to the Department of Community Health, there have been 3 Commissioners leading the agency, with the most recent Commissioner appointed in May 2010.
- Effective February 1, 2010, M. Rony Francois, MD, MSPH, PhD, was appointed the new Director of the Division of Public Health, a position vacant since July 1, 2009, but with the Commissioner serving in an acting role.
- In May 2010, Dr. Francois was also named State Health Officer, a role also held previously by the Commissioner.

#### 2. H1N1

- Produced a manual, *Influenza Vaccine Administration Toolkit for Authorized Health Care Professionals*,  
<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/immunization/index.asp>
- Received ASPR grant funding to support a position responsible for rebuilding the pool of nurse volunteers in the Georgia Nurse Alert System.
- Hired an H1N1 school nurse as liaison to the Department of Education, Public Health and Emergency Preparedness and Response to assist in reaching the school-aged population as one of the target groups for H1N1 vaccination. PHER funding for this position ends June 30, 2010.

### **3. Workforce Development**

- Received agency approval of new PHN Salary Guidelines.
- New Division Director has requested an implementation plan for the Public Health Nursing Career, which was approved in 2009. This process involves collaboration with Environmental Health, Epidemiology, Nutrition, Dental and Laboratory to support the development and implementation of career tracks across all of these disciplines vital to Public Health.
- Developed tools for local Public Health Nurses to use in making presentations in the classrooms within the baccalaureate nursing programs. This package was pilot tested in 2 schools of nursing. Plans are underway to finalize the package for statewide distribution and use by fall 2010.

### **4. Annual Nurse Week Celebration with CDC**

- Approximately 200 attendees at this 4<sup>th</sup> annual event.
- This celebration has grown from a Nurses Tea to a full day conference.
- Recognized 21 Public Health Nurses for Excellence and Presented Awards.
- Dr. Francois, Division Director, honored the role and importance of Public Health Nurses.

## **Projects/Issues Pending:**

### **1. EPSDT**

After 25 years of Public Health Nurses providing EPSDT services, Medicaid has indicated plans to discontinue reimbursement for services provided by expanded role RNs on the basis of not meeting CMS policies. The Division is in discussions with the Commissioner and Medicaid in making its case for Public Health to continue providing EPSDT services.

### **2. Access to Essential Nurse Training Resources**

The Office of Nursing is continuing to seek Division support to improve ways to provide the training the Public Health Nurses need. Budget cuts, high turnover and extended vacancies have negatively impacted the capacity of the state office programs to provide training that the districts have relied upon to prepare new nurses and update current nurses. The lack of these essential training resources has reached a level of concern expressed by the District Nursing Executive Leaders as well as the State Office Nurse Consultants and the Office of Nursing. Discussions with Division leadership are underway to explore solutions.

### **3. Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement**

In collaboration with State Office Nurse Consultants and District Nursing Leaders, we completed a 3<sup>rd</sup> round of streamlining the QA/QI standards for Public Health Nursing. Revisions to the QA/QI manual are in process.

### **4. Guidelines for Placement of Students in Public Health**

We developed a draft of guidelines for placing students (all disciplines) in public health settings for statewide use.