

Public Health Broward is a newsletter for the community from the Florida Department of Health in Broward. We will focus on public health issues and services offered by the Department.

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Issue #4

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Public Health Broward

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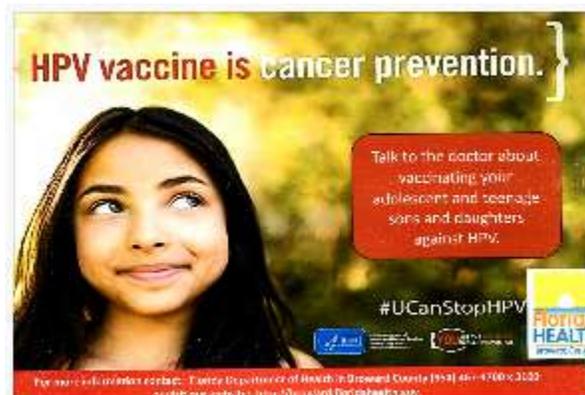
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[Doing More to Protect Kids from HPV](#)

Some parents don't like to hear about it. Some doctors don't like to talk about it. As a result, the Florida Department of Health in Broward County will start a special initiative to increase it.

"It" is the vaccine for human papillomavirus, which federal experts recommend for girls and boys starting at age 11-12 to prevent cancers caused by the sexually transmitted infection.

Unlike other immunizations, the three-dose HPV vaccine is not required for school enrollment in Florida and is not offered by some physicians. Vaccination rates are low in the nation, but especially in Broward and Florida.



DOH-Broward is preparing a campaign to start in summer to increase the number of adolescents vaccinated against HPV, says Dr. Paula Thaqi, Director of DOH-Broward.

"We think the major issue is education," Thaqi says. "Parents may be hesitant about the vaccine. We need to communicate that the vaccine can prevent cancers."

Every year, HPV causes 21,000 cases of cervical cancer (1,000 in Florida) and kills 4,000 women – and also causes other genital cancers and warts.

In 2013, an estimated 50 percent of Florida girls got a first dose of HPV vaccine (seventh lowest among states) and 28 percent of boys (17th lowest), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Only 34 percent of Florida girls and 13 percent of boys received all three needed doses. The rates in South Florida are thought to be similar.

To address the problem, DOH-Broward won a \$40,000 grant over two years from the National Association of County and City Health Officials – one of only nine given nationwide.

The grant will fuel the new campaign, which will concentrate on informing medical providers about the vaccine and educating families about benefits and misconceptions.

DOH-Broward is asking parents to take a minute and [fill out an anonymous, nine-question survey](#) that will gauge their thoughts on the vaccine.

There's also a logistical hurdle to solve. The vaccine is given in three doses over six months, but many families never return for the second or third dose. The campaign is expected to include a system to remind families about the follow up doses.

[More information](#)

Spotlight on ...

Disease Detectives

Specialists Find STD Patients (and Their Partners) to Arrange Treatment

The Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) in [Sexually Transmitted Diseases](#) spend their days locating people who have tested positive for an STD – or their sex partners – and offering them treatment.

Call them the DOH-Broward detectives of disease.

DIS Sonya Richards, a former U.S. Army psychological intelligence operator, went to pick up a girl, 14, to receive treatment, but found the repeat runaway was gone again.

The upset mother had no idea where to find her daughter but Ms. Richards recalled information the teen previously told her and figured out the daughter was with a friend. She recalled the teen mentioning a park and sure enough, found her there and drove her to the clinic.



“I told her that once a week, I would pick her up wherever she desired and take her in for her three weekly injections. That’s an hour-long round trip, but during that traveling time, we talked a lot,” Ms. Richards says.

“She was in a gang and she was doing drugs I’ve never heard of in my life. But she was a beautiful and intelligent young lady. She said she had

seen how her siblings acted rebelliously and she did the same thing, too. Eventually she agreed to talk about outside counseling. Now the family is in counseling,” Ms. Richards says.

Cases like hers are a regular occurrence for the STD staff. The efforts of the 13 DIS field workers and nine other STD staff have helped DOH-Broward reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STDs in the community.

“There is a human factor to what we do and often we are looking at the number of cases, partners, etc. The numbers are important but having staff with the skill set and dedication and genuine concern for people is as important,” says Robert Glover, STD Program Manager.

DIS workers are trained to draw blood to perform STD testing on clients. But most of their work is locating clients. They must sometimes work at night and on weekends to find those who can't be reached during business hours. They may have to look outside South Florida.

DIS staffers typically rely on phone numbers, home and work addresses, family members and official databases to search for STD clients. But like good detectives, they must learn to think creatively when they come up empty.

“The most extreme thing I've ever done to find someone was to get a phone number off of a dog collar,” says DIS Katy Anderson. “I did about three field visits and each time, no one was home. There was a dog there each time I could see through the glass door. When it jumped up to bark at me, I got the phone number and surprisingly enough that phone number helped me reach the client,” Ms. Anderson says.

DIS staffers learn to make their methods fit the surroundings. They must speak plainly and directly, and dress appropriately. Most important, they must be absolutely vigilant to protect a client's confidentiality.

When DIS staffers talk to a minor for the first time, they can't tell the parents why they are there until they have told the child first. If the child is over 12, they need the child's permission to disclose the disease to the parents.

“The parents may get angry. You have to be polite but firm,” says Gabrielle McKoy. “People look at us in a negative light. I like to view us in a positive light. I'm not always bringing good news but when I bring bad news, I have a solution to bring them. ‘You can get treatment’ ”

[More information](#)

Photo: DIS Angelica Williams (left) and DOH-Broward staffers Ashley Hill and Janelle Taveras talk to beachgoers about STDs and HIV/AIDS during 'Beach Blitz' campaign

[Safer by 4: Prevent Drownings, Unsafe Sleep Deaths](#)

Looking at deaths of children under age 4 in Broward over the past five years, unsafe sleep and drowning stand out as significant causes.

In response, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), DOH-Broward, the Children's Services Council and other agencies launched a “Safer by 4” campaign urging the public, firefighters, police, paramedics and city inspectors to watch more closely for life-endangering conditions in the home.

“These deaths were completely preventable. Our goal is to eliminate these tragedies,” said DOH-Broward Director Dr. Paula Thaqi.

Unsafe sleep – Children are safest when they sleep alone, on their backs, in a crib free of items. No blankets, pillows, stuffed animals or bumper pads, said Kim Gorsuch, DCF Circuit Community Development Administrator in Broward.

Parents should not sleep with baby in their arms, or co-sleep in any bed, Gorsuch said. The practice is risky.

Local governments can help by training first responders to educate parents about unsafe sleep environments observed in the home.

Drowning – Children often die in the water without a sound, moments after slipping away unnoticed from a parent or caretaker — with a high risk in Broward from its 130,000 backyard pools and miles of waterways.

The best protection is an adult paying undivided attention to children, especially toddlers. Families should install four-sided fences around pools, alarms on the doors and safety devices on pool drains.

They should learn to swim, teach children to swim and learn CPR. At a time when seconds can determine life or death, drowning children too often stay in the water until paramedics arrive because adults cannot swim to save them.

DOH-Broward is training first responders to recognize safety violations at public pools and report them to the Department for enforcement.

More information: [Child Fatality Prevention](#) or 954-331-3499.

[Enlisting Day Care Centers to Help Educate Parents](#)

When you want to talk to families with young children, there's no better place than a day care center.

That's why DOH-Broward's teams in KidCare Outreach and [Women, Infants and Children](#) have launched a project to visit EVERY day care center in targeted neighborhoods, starting in Fort Lauderdale.

The department is enlisting day care operators to give parents information about the two programs, because many families do not know they qualify for KidCare's package of health coverage options or WIC's services of nutritional counseling, breastfeeding support and healthy food assistance. So, they do without.

"We have been interested in doing outreach at day care centers for a long time. This project is an excellent opportunity to do it successfully," says Rebecca Miele, Director of [KidCare Outreach](#).

KidCare estimates that 60,000 children in Broward do not have health coverage. WIC estimates that 62,000 adults and children are eligible for services, but one-quarter of them are not enrolled, says WIC Director Rebecca Hacker.

KidCare initiated the project as part of a United Way grant that permitted the hiring of an outreach worker to cover the 33311 ZIP code, which straddles Interstate 95 in the Fort Lauderdale area. WIC joined as part of its outreach campaign for hard-to-reach families.

Staffers will visit all 36 day care locations in 33311, asking operators to give parents program information and enrollment cards. The centers will also host an enrollment session one evening at pick-up time. As incentives, KidCare gives operators gift cards and WIC gives them a stipend if they become certified as "breastfeeding friendly."

The programs plan to expand to other ZIP codes. "We have a lot of opportunity," Hacker says.

Hi Mom and Dad -- Time for the Baby to Get Shots

New parents are so swamped that things can fall through the cracks. DOH-Broward wants to make sure childhood immunizations do not meet that fate.

A new Shots by Two program was created to send participating families a series of colorful postcards as a reminder that their babies are due for a vaccination.

"If we help parents remember it's time for a vaccination, they are more likely to bring in the baby for shots," says Laurie Colon Villafane, Program Manager of Immunizations Outreach.

During a baby's first two years, the program mails seven "birthday" cards covered with pictures of stuffed animals and the message "It's Time to Immunize." Parents are urged to bring the baby to their doctor or DOH-Broward for shots.



But the hardest work is reaching parents and asking them to sign consent forms agreeing to receive the cards. The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program at DOH-Broward has been signing up families among its clients.

Jeannette Alonso, the Shots by Two representative, has signed up delivery hospitals in Broward to give new parents a signup card. She also is recruiting day care centers to participate.

Partners in the project include Healthy Families, the Children's Services Council of Broward, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies of Broward, Healthy Start and Family Central.

More information: Jeannette Alonso, 954-467-4700 Ext. 5711 or Jeannette.alonso@flhealth.gov

[Addressing a Rise in Teen Suicide](#)

A small but troubling rise in teen suicides and attempted suicides has prompted Broward County Public Schools, DOH-Broward and other agencies to take action.

Every middle and high school will see a campaign of positive support, on posters and wallet-cards designed by a student who attempted suicide. More actions will follow.



The problem came to light in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey given to 1,500 middle and high school students. It showed that 12.7 percent had suicidal thoughts, up from 10.7 percent in 2007, and 4.1 percent said they were injured in suicide attempts, up from 2.2 percent.

Eleven teens ages 14 to 17 died by their own hand from 2011 to 2013, compared to six from 2007 to 2009.

Reasons for the trend are not clear, but suicide prevention counselors say the economic downturn and pressure to succeed raises anxiety for teens.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual students, as well as teen girls, are at elevated risk for suicidal thoughts, says Charlene Grecsek, Coordinator of the Network for Students with Emotional / Behavioral Disabilities at Broward public schools.

In response, the Broward County Comprehensive School Health Advisory Committee (BCCSHAC), led by DOH-Broward, began working with the Parkland suicide survivor.

Now in college, she is young enough to speak credibly to teens. Her poster urges students to “Keep Holding On” and to seek help from the Teen Hotline at Broward 2-1-1.

Broward School Board Member Robin Bartleman, who is on the committee, says she will propose that public school staff receive mandatory training on warning signs of suicide and best ways to help.

Other participating agencies include Broward Regional Health Planning Council, the Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention, Children’s Services Council of Broward County and Broward Health.

[Fighting Fire with Fire vs. Tobacco](#)

The Tobacco-Free Partnership of Broward County, led by DOH-Broward, is fighting back against tobacco advertising that targets teens.

Anti-tobacco wall posters have been mounted beside big, colorful tobacco banners at 25 convenience stores that are popular with teens. The posters attempt to counteract ads for sweet-flavored tobacco products that are aimed at young tastes.

The partnership’s posters show a piece of bubble gum set as bait in a jagged-tooth animal trap, with the message: “Don’t Let Flavored Tobacco Trap Our Kids.”



“This is exactly where we need to be,” says Kiesha Edge, DOH-Broward Tobacco Prevention Program Director. “These places are where children go after school. Thousands of kids are going to see these posters.”

Tobacco makers have been criticized for making candy-flavored cigars, snuff and other products, and promoting them with kid-friendly names and packaging. Some teens mistakenly believe these products are not harmful.

The partnership’s posters by All-Star Media went up at stores near 24 middle and high schools. To get the stores to say yes, the partnership is leasing their wall space, just like the tobacco companies do.

More information: 954-467-4700 Ext. 5808 or basilisa.perkins@flhealth.gov

[Supermarkets Step Up to Educate the Community](#)

As many as 17 additional supermarkets are partnering with DOH-Broward to bring health education and outreach efforts to their clients.



The 17 belong to the [National Association of Supermarkets Florida Chapter](#), a group of Hispanic-owned stores offering specialty foods and niche service primarily in areas underserved by major supermarkets. The group’s board will urge store owners to let DOH-Broward bring in information tables, mobile testing vans, screenings, wellness presentations and program enrollment efforts.

DOH-Broward already has been staging educational activities since November at four [Save-a-Lot stores owned by Leevers Supermarkets](#), in Plantation, Fort Lauderdale and two in Hollywood.

The new outreach action should begin before summer at the 17 stores including seven markets in the Bravo chain, two Broward Meat & Fish locations, Food Bazaar in Deerfield Beach, Food Town in Davie; International Supermarket in Margate, National Market in Pompano Beach, Neighbors in Sunrise, Pompano Supermarket, Price Choice and Super Saver, both in Fort Lauderdale.

Smart shopping: Meanwhile, the four Save-a-Lot stores have agreed to open their doors to smart-shopping tours led by [Florida Introduces Physical Activity and Nutrition to Youth \(FLIPANY\)](#), starting April 28.



FLIPANY staff will show tour-takers how to read labels to find nutritious food, to avoid unhealthy food and to save money. Each participating shopper gets a \$10 gift certificate or gift bag from Save-a-Lot.

*The Save-a-Lot tours will start at **10:30 a.m.** as follows: **April 28** at 3865 W. Broward Blvd. in Plantation; **May 27** at 8890 NW Seventh Ave. in Miami, and **June 24** at 820 South 60 Ave. in Hollywood. Reservations are required. No more than 24 shoppers each day. To make a reservation, contact 954-567-5526 Ext. 1397, 954-213-0607 or lalbertini@flipany.org.*

[Broward Students Sweep Radon Poster Contest -- Again](#)

For a second straight year, Broward County high school artists finished 1-2-3 in the Florida Department of Health radon poster contest.

All three of the winners are students at Hollywood Academy of Arts and Science, and sponsored by DOH-Broward [Environmental Health](#) program. The nationwide contest uses student art to spotlight the dangers of radon gas.

Taking first place in Florida was the poster of Alexei Kiyani (left), second place went to Maria Kuraeva (center) and third place went to Leticia Coelho.



[Our Services, Programs and Locations](#)

- * [Breast and Cervical Cancer](#) – Mammograms, screenings, diagnostic testing, medical referrals and education for eligible women
- * [Dating Matters](#) -- Pilot program to prevent teen dating violence
- * [Dental Care](#) – Free or low-cost care for children and for adults in the Ryan White Part A program
- * [Drowning Prevention](#) -- Information and advocacy to prevent childhood drownings
- * [Emergency Management](#) -- Planning, training and community mobilization to address emergencies
- * [Environmental Health](#) -- Inspections, permits and sanitary nuisance complaints
- * [Epidemiology](#) -- Monitoring and investigation of infectious disease outbreaks, and data collection
- * [Family Planning](#) -- Exams, counseling, birth control and sterilization
- * [Hepatitis](#) – Testing, vaccination, diagnosis and medical referrals
- * [HIV/AIDS Testing](#) – At our locations or in the community
- * [Immunizations](#) – All childhood and adult vaccines
- * [KidCare Outreach](#) -- Recruiting and enrolling families in state-sponsored health coverage for children
- * [Pharmacy](#) – Medications for clients enrolled in AIDS Drugs Assistance Program, Ryan White Part A program and our services

- * [Refugee Health](#) – Testing, immunizations and medical referrals
- * [School Health](#) -- Nursing care and health service in schools
- * [School Physicals](#) – Exams needed by children entering Broward County public schools for the first time
- * [Sexually Transmitted Diseases](#) (STD) – Diagnosis and testing. Treatment provided by the Broward Wellness Center under contract with DOH-Broward
- * [Tobacco Prevention](#) -- Educating and advocating to reduce tobacco usage
- * [Tuberculosis](#) – Testing, diagnosis, treatment and directly observed therapy
- * [Vital Records](#) -- Birth and death certificates
- * [Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\)](#) – Breastfeeding support, nutrition counseling, nutritious foods and referrals

HEALTH CENTERS and WOMEN INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC) OFFICES



Fort Lauderdale Health Center | 2421 SW Sixth Ave.

Edgar P. Mills Health Center | 900 NW 31st Ave., Fort Lauderdale

Paul Hughes Health Center | 205 NW Sixth Ave., Pompano Beach

North Regional Health Center | 601 W. Atlantic Blvd., Pompano Beach

South Regional Health Center | 4105 Pembroke Rd., Hollywood

WIC-ONLY OFFICES

Central | 3756 W. Oakland Park Blvd., Lauderdale Lakes

North | 10077 NW 29th St., Coral Springs

OTHER

Administrative Center | 780 SW 24th Street, Fort Lauderdale

Operations Center | 2421-A SW 6th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale

CALL FOR APPOINTMENTS: [Health centers](#) 954-467-4705 or [WIC](#) 954-767-5111

Editor's note on Issue #4

*Public Health Broward is published by the
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Mission: To protect, promote and improve the

health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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