



NETWORK NEWS



"Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting, and autumn a mosaic of them all"- Stanley Horowitz

IS IT OVER YET? FLORIDA'S BATTLE AGAINST 4 STORMS

Hurricane season officially began on June 1 and no one expected that within six weeks four hurricanes would have such devastating effects on the state of Florida. The 2004 Hurricane Season will go down as being one of the most chaotic, strongest, deadly and devastating seasons in recent history. First, there was Charley, which made landfall near the Port Charlotte region of the Florida Gulf Coast with 145 mile per hour winds on Friday, August 13. There have been 25 deaths attributed to this storm, 5,000 people out of work, several thousand still homeless, an estimated 12,100 homes destroyed with another 19,100 homes severely damaged. Next in line was Frances, which made landfall over the Sea-

walls Point area of the East Central Coast of Florida as a Category 2 hurricane on Sunday, September 5, 2004. Frances caused approximately \$4.4 billion worth of damage, left 6 million people without power, and killed 15 people. A week later the Florida panhandle braced for Ivan's impact. Ivan came ashore in the early morning of September 16, and left extensive damage to homes, businesses and a section of Interstate 10 in Escambia County was washed away, leaving it impassable. Hurricane Ivan has become the deadliest storm in the United States since Hurricane Floyd, which hit in 1999. Ivan left 40 people dead and another 70 were killed when Ivan tore through the Caribbean. It has been estimated that the damage caused by Ivan is between \$3-

10 billion. Hurricane Jeanne has been the latest, and hopefully last storm, Florida has had to battle with. Jeanne caused over 1,500 deaths in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Florida. The storm came ashore near Stuart, Florida on September 25 as a Category 3 hurricane. Damages caused by Jeanne have been estimated between \$5-9 billion. A positive note to all of this chaos is there are indications that the remaining part of the Hurricane Season, which ends on November 30, will be calmer than the past few months. It may take months and possibly years for the victims of these devastating hurricanes to recover. If you are interested in making a

donation to hurricane victims please visit the American Red Cross at www.americanredcross.com



or call 1-800-HELP-NOW to donate to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. If you would like your donation to stay in a particular area affected by the storms you must specify this upon making a donation.

Information extracted from www.hurricaneville.com

DeSoto & Hardee Counties Cleanup After Hurricanes Leave Behind Destruction

The arrival of Hurricane Charley surprised many residents of Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands Counties. The storm's projected path had it making landfall near the Tampa area, but Charley took an unexpected turn and made landfall, packing 145 mph winds, along the Lee County coastline, dam-



aging or destroying thousands of homes, knocking down tens of thousands of trees, and taking out power to more than 2 million Floridians. The majority of damage to the citrus crop was concentrated in DeSoto, Hardee, Charlotte, Polk, Lee, Manatee, and Sarasota counties.

Of these counties, DeSoto, Hardee and Polk were hit the hardest. In DeSoto, it is estimated that two-thirds of the orange crop was knocked off the trees. The county produces an annual citrus crop worth \$100 million. It was estimated that 17,000 out of 34,000 DeSoto residents are without a home now. Charley caused an estimated \$750 million in dam-

ages in Hardee County. Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne, which brought with it 50 mph sustained winds, exacerbated damage already done by Charley. The process of rebuilding and repairing damages could take years. FEMA assistance is available. For more information on how to receive assistance please call 1-800-621-FEMA or visit www.fema.gov

Lateral Thinking



"Vertical thinking is digging the same whole deeper. Lateral thinking is trying again elsewhere." - Edward de Bono

"Opportunities? They are all around us... there is power lying latent everywhere waiting for the observant eye to discover it." - Orison Swett Marden

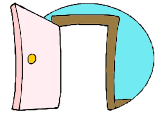
"Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it." -Michael Jordan

"The person who gets the farthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare. The sure-thing boat never gets far from shore." - Dale Carnegie

Best Of Luck!

The Network would like to recognize the retirement of Dr. Donald Toews, former Director of the DeSoto County Health Department. We wish him the best of luck in his travels!

The Network would also like to recognize the resignation of Mike Callahan, former President of Highlands Regional Medical Center. We wish him success in his future endeavors.



DESOTO HEALTH RESOURCE BACK ON TRACK: DOORS OPENING IN OCTOBER

DeSoto Health Resource, Inc. (DHRI) had originally planned on opening its doors to DeSoto County residents on August 31, 2004, but this was delayed due to the devastating effects of Hurricane Charley. The building that housed the DHRI offices was damaged due to the storm. The offices will be temporarily located in another mobile unit on the same property. DHRI will be opening on Tuesday, October 19, 2004. The mission of the organization is to improve the quality of life for all resi-

dents of DeSoto County by implementing creative healthcare solutions in collaboration with interested and committed community partners.

The Network would like to recognize and thank the following organizations for their gracious contribution to this important program:

- * *Arcadia Drug Store* in DeSoto County made a gracious contribution of \$1,200 for the first year of operation. This money will be used for acute and emergent medication needs.
- * *Publix Supermarkets*

made a one time contribution of \$500.

- * *Kash N' Karry* made a one time contribution of \$1,000
- * DHRI also received \$25,000 through FEMA, which will be dispersed by the United Way.

If you would like to make a donation to DHRI or volunteer your time please contact Jan LoPorto, Program Coordinator, at 863-494-1351. The program will be open on Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m.– 3:00 p.m. The office is located at 1901 S.E. Baker Street in Arcadia.

FLORIDA RURAL HEALTH SUMMIT RESCHEDULED

The recent hurricanes have disrupted many events, including the Rural Health Summit originally scheduled to be held on October 3-6 in Altamonte Springs,

Florida. The Summit has been rescheduled for December 6-8, 2004. The Summit is sponsored by the Florida Rural Health Association and the Florida Depart-

ment of Health. For more information please call 850-245-4340 or e-mail Robert Pannell at Robert_Pannell@doh.state.fl.us

DESOTO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR

The DeSoto County Health Department extends a warm welcome to Mary Kathryn Burns, the new Director of the DeSoto County Health Department. Mary Kay has 23 years of progressive decision making as a healthcare leader within national multi-system hospitals. She received her Bachelor of Science, Nursing at D'Youville College in Buffalo, New York. She received her Masters in Business Administration at Nova University in

Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She serves on the Board of the American Cancer Society and is the President of the Eleventh Hour Ladies Group of the Elks. Mary Kay has a solid background in management. She has served as Assistant Director of Nursing and Vice President of Nursing Services at Bon Secours-St. Joseph Hospital in Pt. Charlotte, FL., Director of Clinical Resources for Florida Hospital Heartland Division in Sebring, FL, Di-

rector of Quality/Education at North Florida Regional Medical Center in Gainesville, FL., and Director of Case Management/ Utilization Review at Blake Medical Center in Bradenton, FL. Mary Kay starts October 22, 2004. Welcome Mary Kay!



SPOTLIGHT ON NETWORK GRANT ACTIVITIES



Network staff have been busy writing and submitting grants to state and federal agencies.

HRSA Outreach Grant:

A Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) Outreach Grant was submitted in September. The Outreach Grant is designed to encourage the development of new and innovative health care delivery systems in rural communities that lack essential health care services. The grant proposal addresses the health and social service needs of the estimated 1,330 homeless individuals currently residing in Highlands County. The goals of this project are to find and identify the homeless in the county that need health/social services, identify specific problems of the homeless that need to be addressed, provide primary care, prescribe appropriate referrals to health/social service programs, assure client compliance with treatment plans, assist the homeless to obtain health care benefits to which they may be entitled to, provide a mechanism for clients to obtain maintenance medications, and eventually expand the program model into

neighboring rural counties. If successful, the program model will eventually be expanded into DeSoto and Hardee Counties. The objective is to provide health screenings for the homeless and create an individualized treatment plan for each client. This proposed program will reduce the number of unnecessary ER visits, provide support services for housing and employment, provide health care and social service referrals which will help homeless individuals/families improve their health status and become self-sufficient residents of Highlands County. Grant recipients will be notified in May, 2005.

Challenge Grant:

The Network has also submitted a homeless assistance Challenge Grant in October. The Challenge Grant, created in 2001, is available to assist in implementing services and activities contained within local homeless continuum of care plans. The grant can fund activities that focus on areas such as the coordination of efforts to prevent homelessness; provide outreach to those who become homeless to direct them to services; to provide emergency shelter; ensure the availability of supportive ser-

vices to address health, education, and family needs; and make permanent housing available. The Network's request is to provide health screenings (physical, psycho-social and substance abuse) to homeless individuals. Notification of grant awards will occur in December.

Flex Grant:

The Network was the recipient of \$50,000 in grant monies from the State of Florida Department of Health. These grants were awarded to enable the Network to establish a Prescription Assistance Program in DeSoto County, to contract with Florida State University to evaluate and measure the results of a clinical integration demonstration project and assist Florida Hospital Wauchula in the recruitment of a Primary Care physician.

Highlands County Homeless Grant-In-Aid Funding:

The Network recently received \$3,542 in Grant-In-Aid funding that will be used to operate a health services clinic for the homeless in Highlands County.



“...Network staff have been busy writing and submitting grants...”

RURAL CALENDAR



October 19, 2004— DeSoto Health Resource Prescription Assistance Program Opening (1901 SE Baker St. Arcadia, FL 34266 9 am– 3pm)

November 9, 2004— Hardee County Coalition for the Homeless Meeting, Ministries Office, 1:00 pm

November 17, 2004— HRHN Board Meeting at Highlands Regional Medical Center, 11:30 am

November 17, 2004— Highlands County Coalition For the Homeless Meeting, Salvation Army in Sebring, 1 pm

PENDING LEGISLATION: VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

The House Judiciary Committee reported out legislation to reauthorize the Conrad 30 J1 Visa Waiver Program. This legislation represents an agreement that was reached by the House and Senate sponsors and through the leadership of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. This bill provides for a two year reauthorization of the Conrad 30 program

retroactive to May 31, 2004. A nationwide pilot program will give states flexibility in the geographic placement of 5 of their possible 30 state waiver physicians. Additionally, the federal (HHS) J1 waiver program would be applied to both specialists and primary care physicians and exempted from the H1-B Visa Cap. On Monday, October 11, 2004, the U.S. Senate passed the bill by

unanimous consent. The House will have to pass the Senate bill before it can be sent to the President. A provision was added requiring verification of a specialist shortage when seeking a waiver for a specialist. The House leadership agreed to the provision but adjourned before the Senate was able to pass the bill. The bill is expected to be passed when the House reconvenes after the elections.

**Heartland Rural
Health Network, Inc.**

1200 W. Avon Blvd., Room 109
Avon Park, FL 33825

Phone: 863-452-6530
Fax: 863-452-6882
Email: rudy.reinhardt@hrhn.org



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Address Label

POLK COUNTY AWARDED \$903,570 IN GRANT FUNDS

Congratulations are in order for the Health Care Alliance of Polk County and the Polk County Board of County Commissioners, who were awarded \$903,570 in funding from the Health Communities Access Program (HCAP) for the 2004 funding cycle. On September 3, 2004, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced grants totaling almost \$36.8 million to support 35 new HCAP awards and 10 competitive continuation grants for 4th year grantees. HCAP grants help communities in the United States link services delivered by local 'safety net' health care providers into coordinated networks that serve both the uninsured and underinsured residents. The HCAP grant was designed to increase access to health care by eliminating barriers to care and fragmented service delivery, improving efficiencies among the local pro-

viders, and focusing on greater private-sector involvement in the community. The Health Care Alliance of Polk County was designed to enhance the health care delivery system for the low-income uninsured and underinsured in Polk County, Florida. The HCAP client information system is designed to im-



prove linkages between health care providers, increase efficiency, ensure continuity of care, reduce duplicate testing and services, and achieve better health outcomes for patients. The Polk County program will also link health care and social service providers to maximize access to services and efficient distribution of already existing resources.

The grant will expand the volunteer physician provider network, particularly in areas where none currently exists, and increase community awareness of the primary health care and social services currently available in the county. The voters of Polk County also recently voted on a sales tax dedicated specifically for indigent health care. This sales tax will help sustain the Health Care Alliance of Polk County activities after grant funding has ended. Congratulations to the individuals and agencies who dedicated long hours to complete the successful grant. HRHN is very excited to be involved in such a wonderful accomplishment. The hard work and persistence will help many uninsured and underinsured individuals receive necessary health and social services, which will improve the quality of life for these Polk County residents.