



Network News



“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery. And today? Today is a gift. That’s why we call it the present.” *B. Olatunji*

Inside this issue:

Safelink Wireless- Keeping in Touch For Free!	2
Network Receives Winn Dixie Foundation Grant	2
Teen Pregnancy Prevention Efforts Continue in Tri County Area	3
Diabetes Master Clinician Program Moves Into Second Year	4
Highlands Wellness & Diabetes Program Expands Services	4
Central Florida Health Care Receives Funding From President’s Recovery Act	5
Florida Hospital Wauchula Celebrates Growth	5
Free Tobacco Cessation Classes Now Available	6

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Network’s Outreach Grant Program Targets Seniors

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also referred to as the Food Stamp Program, is administered by USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The new name more accurately reflects the Program’s mission to provide food assistance and nutrition education to assist participants as they move to a healthier lifestyle and self-sufficiency. SNAP is the cornerstone of federal nutrition assistance programs and provides crucial support to needy households. In addition to directly helping individuals and families, food stamp benefits provide a boost to local economies. Every \$5.00 in new food stamp benefits generates nearly twice as much in local economic spending. Nationally, if food stamp participation rose just 5%, 2.5 billion in new economic activity would be generated nationwide. **Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc.** was the recipient of a **\$74,000 grant** from the USDA to specifically target seniors who are eligible for SNAP assistance but are not currently receiving this benefit. The purpose of this grant is to educate potentially eligible low-income seniors (60+) about the nutrition benefits of the program, the eligibility rules and provide application assistance. State-



Putting Healthy Food Within Reach

wide, Florida only has a 34% food stamp participation rate for individuals 60+. According to the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, there are an estimated 7,000 individuals in Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto Counties 60 and over who are living at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines that are eligible for Food Stamps. Of these eligible seniors, only 23% are participating—which means **77% of eligible seniors are not receiving this financial and nutritional benefit in our rural communities.** Barriers to participation in SNAP have been identified and are being addressed through HRHN’s outreach program. Barriers to senior’s participation in SNAP include perceived lack of need and/or denial of need, perceived stigma, low expected benefits, misconceptions of the program, and difficulty with the application process. **Jean Mullins, the Network’s Outreach & Eligibility Specialist**, said, “There are many myths that seniors may have about using Food Stamps. I am here to give them the facts and encourage

enrollment in this program. By participating in this program they are able to not only improve their health status by eating nutritious meals, but also have some additional financial resources to help cover other household expenses.” SNAP eligibility criteria is slightly different for seniors. Asset limits for seniors is higher, they are able to get benefits for up to two years at a time, they can receive credit for medical and prescription drug bills exceeding \$35/month unless an insurance company pays for them, and they are still able to receive meals on wheels. HRHN is working with local senior meal programs, churches, and health and social service organizations to encourage enrollment in SNAP and assist seniors with enrollment process in Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto Counties. For more information on SNAP or to schedule a presentation please contact Jean Mullins at 863-452-0638.

Safelink Wireless—Keeping In Touch For Free!

“...Through Lifeline Service eligible individuals receive FREE cellular service, a FREE cell phone, and FREE Minutes every month!”

The state of our economy is impacting more and more rural residents. People are having to make difficult decisions to manage their finances. One federally sponsored program is making cellular phone service more affordable to eligible, low income individuals and best of all—it's FREE! Lifeline Assistance is part of a program that was created by the government to provide discounted or free telephone service to income-eligible consumers. To help bring individuals this important benefit, SafeLink Wireless offers the Lifeline Service. Through the Lifeline Service eligible individuals receive *FREE cellular service, a FREE cell phone, and FREE Minutes every month!* SafeLink Wireless Service does not cost anything – there are no contracts, no recurring fees and no monthly charges. Some features with service include the roll over of any unused minutes, caller ID, call waiting and voicemail. Additional minutes can be obtained by purchasing

TracFone Airtime Cards at any TracFone retailer such as Walmart, Walgreens, Family Dollar, etc. Each state has different benefits for service. Florida benefits include a free Safelink wireless phone and a free cellular plan that gives an individual 68 minutes every month. This is an excellent resource for low income individuals. For more information or to register please visit www.safelinkwireless.com



Florida Eligibility Requirements:

- 1) Participate in a State or Federal assistance program such as Federal Public Housing Assistance, Food Stamps and Medicaid
- 2) Total household income is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines
- 3) No one in the household currently receives Lifeline Assistance
- 4) Have a valid US Postal Address, no PO Boxes accepted

Congratulations!

Warren L. Santander, Heartland Rural Health Network Board Director and Past-President is the new Administrator for Florida Hospital Lake Placid!

Network Receives Grant from Winn-Dixie Foundation

Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc. is the recent recipient of a \$5,000 grant from the **Winn Dixie Foundation**. This grant award will help fund the salaries of two Community Health Navigators (CHN). CHNs are a key component of the Diabetes Master Clinician Program that currently involves over 22 practitioners in Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto Counties. CHNs provide culturally appropriate health education and assist individuals in

navigating the health care system. CHNs are used in the DMCP program to assist patients who need more one-on-one assistance with managing their diabetes. The CHNs work closely with the health care providers to provide continuous feedback on patients' progresses. The Winn-Dixie Foundation has been supporting civic and charitable efforts of associates and customers since the beginning in 1925. Being a good

corporate citizen and a good neighbor in the communities in which they operate has been a part of Winn-Dixie's philosophy and commitment. The foundation focuses on health, youth, education, and community. The Network would like to thank the Winn-Dixie Foundation for their generous contribution to this program.

Winn-Dixie
FOUNDATION

Teen Pregnancy Prevention Efforts Continue in Tri County Area—Grant Funding Continues in 09-10

When faced with obstacles and areas of concern our local communities are excellent at working together to find solutions. This is exactly what happened when it comes to addressing the high teenage pregnancy rates in Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto Counties. The **Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc. (HRHN)** is working closely with organizations in the tri-county area to reduce teen pregnancies and risky behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and illegal drug use. HRHN was the recipient of several state grants for teen pregnancy prevention. The most recent grant was a \$120,000 Abstinence Education Grant funded through the State of Florida that ended on June 30, 2009. During this six month grant 1,561 Hardee and Highlands youth received, at a minimum, five hours of education on teen pregnancy prevention. The Network is currently operating under a five year federal community based abstinence education grant totaling over 2 million dollars. Funding over the five year period is based on the availability of funds in subsequent project years. The Network recently submitted their second year federal budget totaling \$473,763, a 5% decrease from the prior year's funding. Thus far, 3,313 students in Highlands and DeSoto Counties have been provided with at least five hours of education on teen pregnancy prevention. One of the programs designed specifically for girls is called the "Go Girls" program. Go Girls stands for Giving Our Girls Inspiration for Lasting Self

Esteem and is a 16 hour course that focuses specifically on teen pregnancy prevention but also includes topics on body image, peer pressure, how to avoid risky behaviors and other similar topics that positively impact the girls' futures. Staff are getting ready for the start of a new school year and Go Girls programs are expected to begin again in September. Staff will also be conducting in class education for all 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students. Staff have attended numerous trainings over the summer months and are preparing for the upcoming school year. The Network would like to thank the **Central Florida Area Health Education Center** for their generous contribution of over \$10,000 in Baby Think It Over simulator dolls and supplies. Additionally they have provided training to staff on smoking prevention and cessation education for youth. These teen pregnancy prevention programs would not be successful if it wasn't for the support and commitment from the **Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto County** school boards, schools, county health departments and federally qualified health centers, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition members, area health education centers, and the in kind donations from local businesses and organizations. If you are interested in more information on programs in Highlands, Hardee or DeSoto Counties, or would like to volunteer please call 863-452-6530.



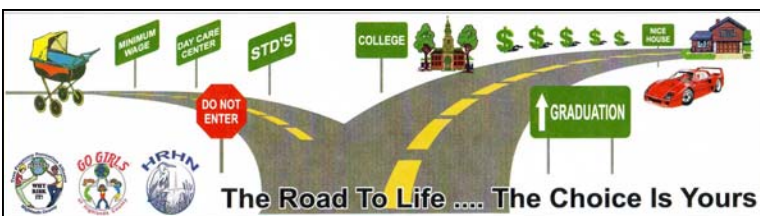
Go Girls is a 16 hour program that provides girls with skills to be a strong, successful young woman.



Keith Deltano, professional speaker, gives a presentation on the values of abstinence to a group of DeSoto County 8th graders



Highlands County Go Girls and their leaders take a moment to pose for a group shot during an education session.



The Avon Park Middle School Go Girls group, led by Kathy MacNeill, won a billboard design contest on how teens perceive teen pregnancy.. This billboard is proudly displayed near the Network's offices on US 27.

Diabetes Master Clinician Program Moves Into Second Year

With one year completed under the Health Resources and Service Administration's Rural Health Network Development Grant, the **Heartland Rural Health Network's Diabetes Master Clinician Program (DMCP)** is going strong. There are currently 22 clinicians in 9 practices represented in the program. The newest clinic to be added is the **Samaritan's Touch Care Center (STCC)**, who joined the registry in April 2009. At STCC, there are 3 clinicians: **Luis Pena, MD; E. Cary Pigman, MD; and Sharon Childress, ARNP**. This is beyond what we had planned for all three years of the grant, and the growth is far beyond what was originally anticipated. The latest figures show that there are over 2,400 patients in the registry and over 7,400 visits logged for them. This continues to grow on a daily basis.

The second and third parts of the grant program are currently being implemented. The first is the group medical visit segment. The Associate

director, Kathy MacNeill, is assisting local offices in starting to conduct group medical visits. The offices will bring their patients in to the offices in small groups with similar needs, for example a session on blood glucose monitoring. The office nurse or medical assistant will conduct an educational session, and then the clinician will do the second part which is more technical and medical. The two components bring the patients and the clinicians together in a more cohesive and productive session, meeting the needs of the patient and creating a bond with the office. This strong bond is a powerful motivator and promotes patient growth and compliance in the treatment routine.

The third component is using Community Health Navigators (CHN) in the home. Many of the people with diabetes are not meeting their management goals. There may be many reasons for this, but if the rates of complications and mortality associated with diabetes are to be reduced,

the patients will need help to overcome these barriers. The CHN works with the clinicians and will do one-on-one visits with patients that are identified as needing further assistance. The CHN will identify barriers to treatment with the patient, and provide them with information and resources to help overcome those barriers.

Historically, there are two communities that have more problem with achieving good diabetes control: Hispanic and African-American communities. These groups are more at risk for developing diabetes, and then have more difficulty managing it.



HRHN has two CHNs hired—one Hispanic and one African-American—to begin working with these populations to address barriers to management of their diabetes. The Network is excited about making a difference in the management of diabetes. For more information please contact Kathy MacNeill at 863-452-6530.

Highlands Wellness & Diabetes Program Expands Services

The increased rates of morbidity and mortality and the economic burden due to the direct and indirect costs of diabetes and other obesity related diseases is staggering and, unless addressed, has the potential to bankrupt our healthcare system and adversely impact our human and economic resources. In order to address this major public health concern, since 2006, the **Highlands County Health Department** Closing the Gap program, through a grant from the Office of Minority Health (OMH), has provided diabetes risk screenings and diabetes self management and health promotion/disease prevention education at no charge to adult residents of Highlands County who are most at risk for developing diabetes or have uncontrolled diabetes due to racial, eth-

nic and economic disparities. Over the last year alone, the program provided diabetes risk screenings, diabetes self management education and evidenced based health promotion/disease prevention education to over 600 residents. This education, provided in English and Spanish and valued at over a quarter of a million dollars, would be unavailable to this population elsewhere in Highlands County.

Although the Closing the Gap OMH grant funding ended in June, through the generous support of the Highlands County Health Department, the Highlands County Board of Commissioners (through the recommendation of the Hospital District Board) and the Heartland Rural

Health Network, the program will continue. **Robert Palussek, Administrator of the Highlands County Health Department** stated, "Diabetes and obesity remains a mission critical priority in Highlands County; therefore we must find ways to keep this program alive under all circumstances though next years fiscal challenges will remain." The Highlands County Health Department Wellness and Diabetes program has expanded educational services to children who are overweight or obese. Health promotion and disease prevention education is provided (in English and Spanish) at no charge to these children and their families who do not have the economic resources to receive



this education elsewhere. For more information please contact Debra Carruso at 863-382-7294.

Central Florida Health Care Receives Funding From President's Recovery Act

Central Florida Health Care, Inc. (CFHC), a federally qualified health center serving Highlands, Hardee, and Polk Counties received a total of \$2,116,287 through two grants under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA or Recovery Act) signed



into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009. This funding has provided financial resources to help CFHC continue their efforts to provide preventative and primary care services to patients, regardless of their ability to pay. HRSA awarded \$338 million through formula allocation grants for *one-time* Increased Demand for Services (IDS) funding in fiscal year 2009. As one-time awards, HRSA has indicated there should be no expectation for ongoing support of IDS activities after the end of the 2-year project period. Health centers across the state of Florida received \$17,616,277 in IDS funding. Of this amount, CFHC was awarded \$665,192. The grants were distributed to 1,128 federally qualified health center grantees across the nation, with 43 awards being granted to community health center organizations in Florida. Funds can be used to add/retain new providers,

expand hours of operations and/or expand services. The funding allocation was made based on the patient information submitted by CFHC. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the 34,000 patients that received services in 2008 from CFHC were uninsured.

The Recovery Act also provided an additional \$851 million for Capital Improvement (CI) grant awards. Health centers across the state of Florida received \$41,038,412 in CI funding. Of this amount, CHHC was awarded \$1,451,095. The grant awards were distributed to 44 federally qualified health center grantees in Florida and 1,123 across the nation. The funds from this CI grant funding will support the construction, repair and renovation of over 1,100 health centers nationwide. More than 650 centers will use the funds to purchase new equipment or health

information technology (HIT) systems and nearly 400 health centers will adopt and expand the use of electronic health records. The Recovery Act was created to: preserve and create jobs, promote economic recovery, help people most impacted by the recession, increase economic efficiency, promote long-term economic benefits, and preserve essential services. "More Americans are losing their health insurance and turning to health centers for care," said Health Resources and Services Administrator (HRSA) Mary Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N. "These grants will aide centers in their efforts to provide care to an increasing number of patients during the economic downturn."

CFHC charges for services are set according to income and family size. CFHC also accepts patients covered by Medicare, Medicare and private insurance companies. New patients are being accepted at locations in Avon Park, Lakeland, Wauchula, Frost-proof and Dundee. Patients can find additional information concerning CFHC at www.cfhconline.org.

**Article submitted by Gaye Williams, CEO, CFHC*



"...CFHC received a total of \$2,116,287 through two grants provided under the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA or Recovery Act.)"



Florida Hospital Wauchula Celebrates Growth

Florida Hospital Wauchula, a critical access hospital, has a new 16 slice state-of-the art CT machine in place. This machine performs all regular studies in addition to angiography. This is

a great technology for the Hardee County community and for the physicians to better diagnose health concerns. Florida Hospital Wauchula also has a new outpatient Center for Sleep Studies which does testing four

nights a week. Additionally, the hospital is now offering diabetes education classes to the public. For more information call 863-402-0177.

**Article submitted by Linda Adler, Florida Hospital Wauchula*



1200 W. Avon Blvd.

Suite 109

Avon Park, FL 33825

Phone: 863-452-6530

Fax: 863-452-6882

Email: rudy.reinhardt@hrhn.org

Email: kelly.johnson@hrhn.org

Email: kathy.macneill@hrhn.org

Visit Us On The Web!

www.hrhn.org &

www.heartlandbreasthealth.org

www.gogirlsfl.org

Mailing Label

Help Us Spread
The Network News!
After reading the news-
letter pass it along for
your colleagues to enjoy!

Board of Directors 2009-2010

Linda Adler, President

David K. Robbins II, Vice President

Robert Palussek, Secretary/Treasurer

Warren L. Santander, Past-President

Mary Kay Burns, Director

Dr. Stephen L. Gordon, Director

David Duke, Director

Lauren M. Canary Director

Blake Warren, Director

Gaye Williams, Director

Daniel B. Harshburger, Director

Robert C. Rihn Director

Vincent A. Sica, Director

J. Rudy Reinhardt, Network

Executive Director

Free Tobacco Cessation Classes Now Available

Central Florida Area Health Education Center (CFAHEC), through funding from the Florida's Master Settlement Agreement, provides local tobacco cessation classes to assist in reducing tobacco usage. Quit Smoking Now (QSN) is a **FREE** 6 week program developed by ex-smokers for those who want to become ex-smokers and is also founded upon evidence based interventions through the US Department of Health and Human Services. QSN is culturally appropriate for state-wide implementation because one of the fundamental tenets is to tailor a cessation message that meets the unique needs of the individual. Facilitators of the QSN program are

trained tobacco cessation specialists and counselors who provide participants with the knowledge, techniques and support necessary to quit using tobacco. Improving rates of successful cessation, the program will assist individuals and communities in reducing the risk for lung cancer and other smoking related diseases. Among current U.S. adult smokers, 70% report that they want to quit so to locate the closest Quit Smoking Now class in your area please call 1-87-Quit-Now-6 (1-877-848-6696).

Did You Know
* A one-pack-a-day smoker can save over \$2,000 a year by quitting.
* Nearly one in five deaths in the United States results from the use of tobacco.
* Smoking is the #1 most preventable cause of death

*Article submitted by Bethany Majka, Central Florida Area Health Education Center

