

# Network News

"You have achieved success if you have lived well, laughed often and loved much." *Anonymous*

## *Big Muscles With Bigger Messages*

### *Two Professional Football Players Speak to Tri-County Teens*

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Through several local grants, **Heartland Rural Health Network, Drug Free Highlands (DFH), and the Highlands Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance (TPPA)** were able to host former professional football players and motivational speakers, Keith Davis and Devin Wyman, who both shared their stories and affirming messages with parents and teens on issues such as communication, setting goals, peer pressure, and making healthy choices for their futures. Over 150 parents and youth attended this non-denominational event on April 15, 2010 at the United Methodist Church in Sebring. This community program was so well received that HRHN staff worked with the Hardee, Highlands, and DeSoto County TPPA Coordinators and school administrations to bring Davis and Wyman back to speak with middle school students in these three rural communities. In early June, Davis and Wyman visited six middle schools over a period of three days and shared their messages with over 1,200 youth in 6th-8th grade. Coming from fatherless homes, having had difficulty early on in school, and being around dangerous



Wyman lifts two DeSoto Middle School girls and turns in a complete circle while holding them above.



Wyman impresses his young audience by completing several push-ups while a student stands on his back. Davis (left) helps the student balance.

crowds, these two former professional football players now spend their time sharing their messages with youth—“wrong voices lead to wrong choices.” Davis, who played on the University of Southern California championship teams—winning the Rose Bowl twice and Wyman, a member of the New England Patriots when they won the Super Bowl, led students through an hour long presentation mixing humor with displays of strength to relay their messages on dreaming big and accomplishing great things.

*Story continued on page 2.*

## Big Muscles With Bigger Messages, continued



Wyman (left) and Davis (right) take a moment to pose with a student

Both men shared with students their dreams of playing in the National Football League. They talked of how much they had to work and how important education was to being successful. At one point in their presentation Wyman stops and asks the girls in the audience, “tell me, if I gave you \$25,000 would you give it to your boyfriend?” “No” booms from the girls in the audience. “If I gave you \$250 would you give it to your boyfriend?” “No” the girls would yell again.

“Then tell me...why give your bodies away?” The audience is silent after Wyman shares this powerful message. Davis tells students that “you don’t have to be great to get started, you just have to get started to be great.” Both Davis and Wyman told the audience that life isn’t easy and education takes a lot of hard work and effort, but seeking out the dream makers and avoiding the dream breakers can help achieve goals. They shared that dreaming big is good and to not get distracted which can lead to a dead end. The excited audience roared with cheers and



Davis (left) helps hold a student’s hand up (wearing Davis’ Rose Bowl jersey) to show the audience Davis’ Rose Bowl championship rings and two Super Bowl rings from Wyman (right).

stomping feet on the school bleachers. To emphasize messages of dreaming big Davis wowed the audience by bending a steel rod into a U shape by using his upper body strength. The message was simple---no matter how far you might be going down a wrong path you can always make a u-turn. “They are reaching kids in a way that we can not, through their fame and their own stories,” one school administrator said. When asked what they thought about the program, a teen girl stated, “I have learned that it is possible to have a very hard life and still

accomplish my goals for my own future” while another teen added, “I learned that I need to look at the future because no matter how hard I try I can't change what has happened in the past. I have to have a vision for my future.” The duo ended each of their presentations by selecting one member of each audience who was brought on stage and allowed to wear Davis’ Rose Bowl jersey and championship rings as well as Wyman’s two Super Bowl rings. The look on the crowd’s faces said it all.....“Wow!”

### Fun Facts



**At 6’1” and weighing 265 lbs, Keith Davis can bench press a whopping 515 lbs and leg press 1800 lbs!**

**Devin Wyman, standing 6’8” and weighing 335 lbs. can bench press over 500 lbs. and run the 40 yard dash in 4.6 seconds!**



Davis (left) holds up the U turn steel bar while Wyman (right) and the audience cheered him on for his tremendous effort



Wyman and Davis seek audience participation for various strength activities while delivering positive messages through each activity



Students crowd around Wyman while he signs autographs—both Davis and Wyman took time after presentations to sign autographs

## Samaritan's Touch Announces New Executive Director

Samaritan's Touch Care Center recently announced that Rachel Nawrocki is the organization's new executive director. Founder Diaba Furr retired. The center provides Highlands County's uninsured, needy families access to medical care. "Rachel Nawrocki is a highly qualified leader that will take STCC into the future," said Kim Schlosser, president of the STCC Board of Directors. "Rachel has actively stepped into her new role as executive director. We will certainly miss Diana who served since its inception. We all wish Diana the very best in her decision to retire

and travel with her husband Bud. We would also like to thank Bud Furr for his many years of legal leadership donated to STCC." Nawrocki has a master's degree in management and a bachelor's in organizational management. She lives in Sebring with her husband and three children. Her husband, Zbigniew Nawrocki, is the ancillary services director at Florida Hospital Heartland Medical Center. Rachel Nawrocki also volunteers as a court appointed guardian ad litem, and devotes much of her time volunteering as a sports coach at the Highlands County YMCA. Sa-

maritan's Touch Care Center is a 501 c 3 Christian humanitarian organization that provides primary medical care to anyone who is without medical insurance, with an income below 200% of federal poverty guidelines. Since its inception in May 2007, STCC has provided donated medical care estimated at over \$10 million. For more information about services or volunteering



Rachel Nawrocki has taken on the role of Executive Director of Samaritan's Touch Care Center

please call 471-1870.

*\*Article extracted from Highlands Today and News Sun Press Releases*

## DMH Grows Services to Meet County Needs



**DeSoto Memorial Hospital** continues to grow it's services to accommodate DeSoto County. DMH recently announced that they are welcoming Dr. Gadi Kayali to their Oncology

Program starting July 12, 2010. Chemotherapy treatments will be given on the 3rd floor of the hospital. This is a great program for the residents of DeSoto County who have been traveling to

Port Charlotte several times per week. Dr. Kayali will have office hours as well.

Other new specialty physicians starting in the coming months: Board Certified Plastic Surgeon, Board Certified

Interventional Pulmonologist, Board Certified Nephrologist, Board Certified Neurosurgeon, Board Certified Pediatric Cardiologist, and Board Certified Cardiologist.

In other news, DMH's Senior Life Improvement Program was nominated for the Area Agency on Aging Golden Appreciation Award for the valuable work done with the Senior Population to help them combat depression and loneliness.

There are also many "firsts"

for various medical procedures at DMH including: VATS procedure (video-assisted thoracoscopy), Carotid Endarterectomy, Mediastinoscopy, Thoracotomy, Axillo-Femoral Bypass, and Popliteal-Tibial bypass.

DMH is also moving forward with their Tobacco Cessation Program which began in March, 2010. The program has been quite successful with three classes per month running simultaneously with 18-22 participants per class.

*Article submitted by Kristen Spahr, DMH Director of Marketing*

## Central Florida Health Center to Open New Site: Lake Wales Clinic Project Receives \$1 Million from State for Equipment

**Central Florida Health Care (CFHC)**, a federally qualified health center, currently operates centers in Highlands, Hardee, and Polk Counties. The state legislature recently approved an appropriation which will provide \$1 million to help fund a new clinic to be operated by CFHC. This clinic will provide dental and medical services targeting the Lake Wales community in Polk County. According to an article published June 7, 2010 in the Lakeland Ledger, 28 people will be employed at the clinic. The city has donated the building and lot, although the building, which was in a dilapidated state, has been torn down and a new clinic is being built with \$2 million from the business community. The \$1 million ap-

proved in the state budget will help purchase dental and medical equipment for the new center.

CFHC is a nonprofit medical center that treats uninsured patients on a sliding payment scale, based on income. They also treat people who are insured. As it relates to the construction of the new facility in Lake Wales, CEO Gaye Williams stated, "We know without a doubt this need exists. It's documented." According to Ms. Williams, seventeen percent of people in the zip code 33853 (Lake Wales area), were uninsured in 04-05 and this number is probably higher due to the current economic state. According to Ms. Williams, CFHC's Dundee clinic is too



**The old Walker building in Lake Wales was torn down and a new clinic facility is currently being constructed on the site. Central Florida Health Care operates centers in Polk, Hardee, and Highlands Counties.**

small to absorb the number of people in need of primary and preventative health care services. The Lake Wales center will provide a "medical home" for patients currently not accessing such services which

helps to reduce unnecessary use of the emergency rooms. Dental services will come in the first phase with medical services in second.

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

## Healthy Start Coalition Updates Service Delivery Plan

**The Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties, Inc. (HSC)** is a nonprofit organization established in 1992 to serve as an advocate for improved maternal and child health services for all residents in Hardee, Highlands, and Polk

Counties, FL. As a community based organization, the HSC updates their Service Delivery Plan (SDP) every five years to better serve their targeted population. This plan provides a five year outline for providing community based services that

promotes and supports healthy pregnancies, babies and families. The SDP review uses both state and local maternal and child health data to identify local factors



contributing to poor outcomes such as fetal/infant mortality, low birth weight, accessibility of services, etc that are used to develop an action plan with targeted steps to improve maternal and child health. Findings from all data indicated that the leading cause of death for all races in all counties is prematurity. A SDP Forum was held in March, 2010 to obtain community input. The forum included presentations on data, summaries of provider and consumer surveys and focus groups. Forum participants

were assigned Action Plan focus area workgroups. Action steps added to the 2010-2015 SDP include education on Sudden Infant Death risks and prevention, safe sleep to reduce these types of deaths, education on abuse and neglect, prenatal care, and consumer education on substance abuse, baby spacing. The Coalition values its partnerships and community volunteers who helped make the 2010-2015 SDP successful.

*\*Article submitted by Mary Jo Plews, Executive Director*

## School Year Packed Full of Teen Pregnancy Prevention Activities

Schools out for summer but before the final bell rang on the last day of school over 2,500 middle and high school students in Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto Counties had a busy year by attending various teen pregnancy prevention educational sessions throughout the 09-10 school year. Most youth received, at a minimum, five hours of education with two after school programs running 16 and 40 hours long. All three rural counties rank in the top 10 out of Florida's 67 counties for births to girls 18 and under. Efforts to educate teenagers on risky behaviors is a top priority for the **Heartland Rural Health Network, Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto County**

**Health Departments, and Central Florida Health Care.** The federal Community Based Abstinence Education funding that helps support these programs will end in September, 2010 but HRHN has applied for a new federal teen pregnancy prevention funding opportunity to help continue these prevention programs. Grant award announcements are expected in late summer '10.



## DMCP Program Selected as Data Aggregator for Nationally Recognized Program

Bridges to Excellence is a not-for-profit organization developed by employers, physicians, health care service providers, researchers and other industry experts to recognize and reward medical practitioners who demonstrate that they deliver safe, timely, effective, efficient and patient centered care. **The Diabetes Master Clinician Program (DMCP)**, which is being implemented in at least eight medical practices under **Heartland Rural Health**

**Network's** Rural Health Network Development grant, has recently been designated as an official aggregator for Bridges to Excellence. This means that diabetes quality information that is already being collected on over 2,500 patients in these eight practices through the use of the diabetes registry can now be submitted to a Bridges to Excellence Performance Assessment Organization for initial evaluation and quarterly assessments. Physicians who meet the standards of care

will have their level of achievement recognized publicly and communicated to health plans and participating employers, and where applicable, practitioners can establish eligibility for pay-for-performance bonuses or enhanced reimbursement from payers and health insurance plans. HRHN's local medical practitioners will be encouraged to participate in the Bridges to Excellence program by the DMCP's Medical Director, Dr. Edward Shahady. For more information please call 863-452-6530.

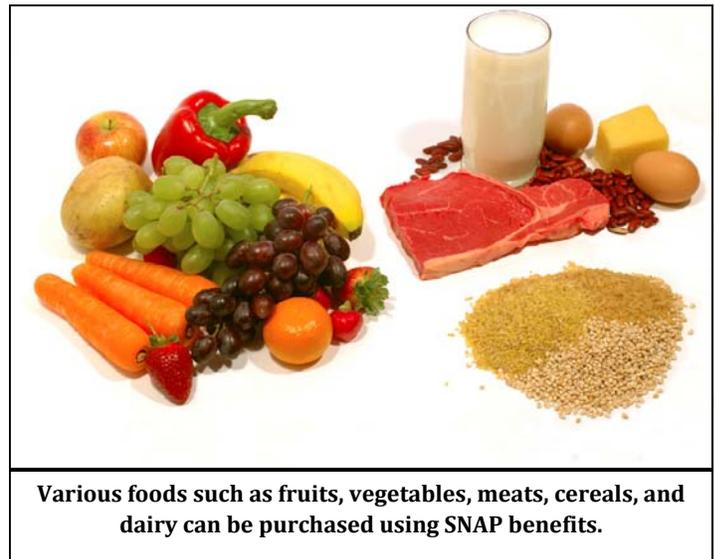


**The DMCP registry will provide aggregated data to the Bridges to Excellence Program.**

## Outreach Program Helps Seniors Save on Food Costs

With the close of June, 2010 the **Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc.** moves into Year 2 of their USDA Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) grant. The purpose of this grant is to increase SNAP participation rates, also referred to as food stamps, with particular emphasis on senior populations, 60+. 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 level and eligible for SNAP benefits. Of these eligible seniors, only 23% are participating. Identified barriers to enrollment include a perceived lack of need and/or denial of need, perceived stigma, low expected benefits, misconceptions of the program, and difficulty with the application process. To address these barriers Angela

Hendry, HRHN's SNAP Outreach Specialist, has been reaching out to the senior population and organizations serving this population in the tri-county area to encourage and assist seniors through the application process. Ms. Hendry attends health fairs and meets regularly with community partners to spread the word about this program. From 7/09 thru 3/10, Ms. Hendry screened 312 potential applicants, submitted 175 applications with 90 being approved as of 3/10. "Many of the couples I have assisted are trying to live on far less than \$1,000 a month and single clients are living on less than \$500 a month," Ms. Hendry explained on why this program is so valuable to our local communities. The application process can be lengthy, based on the timeliness of processing the applications which includes documents and other forms that clients may be required to fax back before an application is assessed by the Florida Department of Children & Families for benefit eligibility. Therefore, some applications applied for up until 3/31/10 can potentially be approved as the Network moves into Year 2 of their grant and will be documented in subsequent reports. Ms. Hendry follows up with clients to determine outcomes of applications and to help address potential diffi-



**Various foods such as fruits, vegetables, meats, cereals, and dairy can be purchased using SNAP benefits.**

culties during their application process. From 7/09 thru 3/10, the largest benefit amounts received by several clients exceeded \$350.00 per month while the smallest benefit amount eligible seniors can receive is \$16.00 per month. Overall, the average benefits received by eligible clients was \$86.50 per month. Ms. Hendry works with clients to show them how to maximize their benefits by purchasing wholesome foods. "This program really helps seniors because the benefits they are receiving helps alleviate some of the financial hardships these seniors may be facing. The money they may have spent on food and can now potentially be allocated to purchase medicines or other items they may have gone without." Ms. Hendry stressed that more programs such as the Network's are needed. "I not only receive calls from all over Flor-

ida, but from other areas across the U.S. in need of application assistance." Although the Network's program focuses on Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto Counties Ms. Hendry will assist individuals over the phone, or refer them to the appropriate state agency for guidance. "There have been seniors who have tried numerous times to complete the application process by themselves but became so frustrated that they gave up. Our program has assisted these individuals through the process and they were finally able to get benefits in a very short period of time." The grant funding to support this program continues until June, 2011. If you, a family member or friend needs assistance through the application process please contact Angela Hendry at 863-452-0638. This service is provided at no cost to clients.



**SNAP benefits can help Seniors purchase wholesome foods using a discreet EBT card**

## AMA Foundation Awards \$10,000 Grant To Samaritan's Touch Care Center

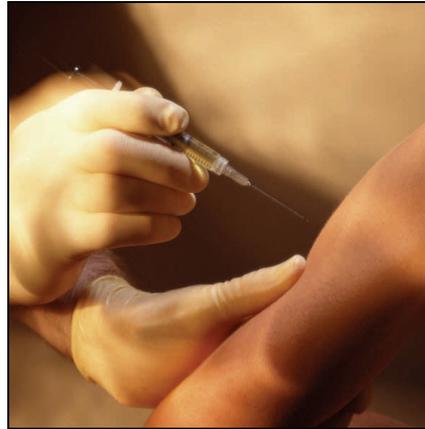
In an effort to address the growing problem of the uninsured and to recognize physician volunteerism, the American Medical Association (AMA) Foundation has awarded a \$10,000 Healthy Communities/Healthy America grant to the **Samaritan's Touch Care Center**. The grant will support the clinic's participation in the Florida Academy of Family Physician Foundations Diabetes Master Clinician Program. Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc., received a federal grant to establish the DMCP program in Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto Counties.

The program helps patients with diabetes work toward their personal goals, understand the reasons for certain tests and medications, and gives them the chance to talk to other people in the community who have diabetes. Samaritan's Touch will enhance their program services by hiring a diabetes pa-

tient advocate who can provide more dedicated support to the DMCP and their patients. The AMA Foundation's Healthy Communities/Healthy America program is one of the few national funding opportunities devoted solely to free clinics. These non-profit, volunteer-based organizations provide a range of free or low-cost medical services to the approximately 46 million Americans without health insurance. Their funding is generally raised on the local level with little, if any, government support.

Samaritan's Touch Care Center is one of only seven free clinics to receive a Healthy Communities/Healthy America grant.

"We are pleased to honor Samaritan's Touch Care Center for striving to continually improve the diabetes care they



provide," said AMA Foundation President Richard Hovland, CPA, CHE, CAE.

"Diabetes requires intensive care management and those who are uninsured face even greater challenges in successfully controlling their disease."

The AMA Foundation offers a broad range of programs in public health and medical education. This year's Healthy Communities/Healthy America program is supported by an educational grant from Lilly USA, LLC.



*"...The AMA Foundation's Healthy Communities/Healthy America program is one of the few national funding opportunities devoted solely to free clinics."*

## MacNeill Selected as Diabetes Delegate to India

Kathy MacNeill, the **Heartland Rural Health Network's** Certified Diabetes Educator and Associate Director of the Diabetes Master Clinician Program was recently invited to join a number of her peers as a member of the Diabetes Education Delegation to India. In conjunction with the People to People Citizen Ambassador Program, this delegation

has been developed to foster one-on-one dialogue with diabetes care givers overseas and to continue the tradition of professional diplomacy first set forth by President Eisenhower in 1956. The delegation, specializing in diabetes education, will convene in India in October of this year. The University of Pittsburgh is also a sponsor of this program. The primary professional objective of this delegation is to seek a better

understanding of the practice of diabetes care and education in India and to determine the best ways of collaborating to improve the health of people around the world. The delegation will explore the interaction of health care providers in various settings to determine the impact on diabetes outcomes. This will be a 10 day trip and the delegation will meet with colleagues in the cities of Delhi, Jaipur and Agra.





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The Network would like to thank the Winn Dixie Foundation for their generous \$1,000 donation to help support the Diabetes Master Clinician Program!



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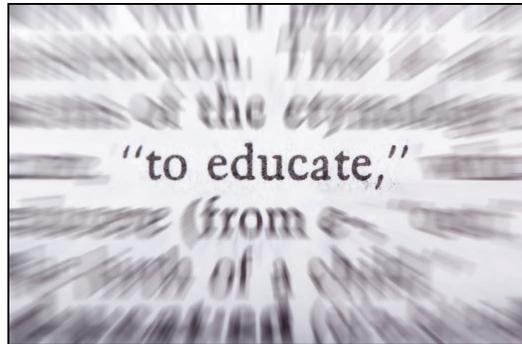


The following grants were submitted by the Network in cooperation with various partners. Award announcements are expected in late summer '10:

- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Agency, Drug Free Communities Grant  
((\$125,000/year for 5 years)
- Dept. of Health & Human Services, Office of Rural Health Policy, Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement Grant  
((\$100,000/year for 2 years)
- Dept. of Health & Human Services, Administration, Administration for Children, & Families, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Tier 2 Grant  
((\$600,000/yr. for 5 years)

## Youth Get Health Care Career Advice: Summer Camp Offered by Local AHEC

Central Florida Area Health Education Center held its annual Summer Health Careers Camp from June 13<sup>th</sup> to



June 16<sup>th</sup> in Orlando, FL. This free of charge camp aims to introduce students from rural and underserved areas of Central Florida to careers in the Health Professions in a hands-on atmos-

phere. After receiving over 130 completed applications, a total of 40 high school students from the nine counties of Central Florida were selected to take part in the four day, residential camp held at Rollins College. This year a total of four-

teen high school students were selected from schools residing in Polk, Hardee and Highlands counties including Avon Park High School, Sebring High School, Lake Placid High School, Mulberry High School, Winter Haven High School, Haines City High School, Frost Proof High School, and Hardee High School.

*\*Article submitted by Marnie Davis, CFAHEC*