

Happy Holidays

Teens Learn About Healthy Choices Through Network Program



The Heartland Rural Health Network (HRHN), The Department of Health and the Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties, Inc. (HSC) have partnered together to bring Highlands and Polk Counties an evidence based, abstinence only education program. This curriculum covers more than just the physical consequences of poor decision making but the outcomes that teen pregnancy has on their families, friends, schools, and communities. Focusing on the positive, this curriculum address a youth's future goals, how to say no effectively, and understanding partner pressure as well as peer

Dear

Can you believe that we will be welcoming 2013 in just a few short weeks! Exciting things have been going on right here at the Heartland Rural Health Network. We are happy to share with you some great updates from our various programs as well as share some exciting news from our members and community partners! We are happy to share a lengthy newsletter as we had a record number of submissions from our readers! Thank you for your commitment to improving rural health care through your association with the Heartland Rural Health Network. We look forward to working with you throughout the coming year to further positive health outcomes for residents living in the Network's service area. If the Network can be of assistance to you please give us a call. We look forward to having a prosperous New Year and wish you a wonderful, prosperous 2013 as well!

CFHC Celebrates 40 Years Serving Local Communities!

40 years ago--four decades Central Florida Health Care (CFHC), formerly Florida Rural Health Services, Inc., originated in Frostproof, FL. From modest beginning in 1972, CFHC has become part of a state and nationwide health care safety net system. For more than 45 years, health centers have been responsible for bringing physicians and other clinical providers and access to comprehensive primary and preventative health services into the nation's neediest and most isolated communities. Now 40 years later, the mission of CFHC remains strong and steadfast in spite of ever-changing healthcare landscape. Gaye Williams, CEO, stated, "Successes and victories have come from a strong community-based governing Board of Directors that are "fixed" and "united" behind the management team. Going from good to great has been

pressure. Over the past year, HRHN and HSC have served over 1,000 students in many different locations such as charter schools, after school programs, weekend workshops, teen court, Department of Juvenile Justice, diversion programs and more.

In addition to providing education to youth, this program also provides simple and effective ways for parents to talk to their youth about positive decision making. HRHN and HSC have reached over 200 parents in the last year. The surveys collected after the completion of our program has shown improvements in attitude, skills, and behavior toward practicing abstinence. We look forward to continuing our programs and positively impacting teens lives for years to come.

**submitted by Erica Douberley, HRHN*

Want A C.H.O.I.C.E.?



Heartland Rural Health Network is excited to introduce their newest health education program available community organizations and the general public called the C.H.O.I.C.E program. This is a six (6) week evidence based nutrition

a profound force and vigor for CFHC."

CFHC marked their 40th year with an annual anniversary celebration on November 2, 2012 at the Lake Eva Banquet Hall. The CFHC board of directors were recognized for their service as well as discussing corporate highlights of 2012. Attendees were invited to dance and a wonderful dinner was provided to guests. It was a fantastic event to acknowledge and celebrate the success of CFHC for the past 40 years! "There's no doubt that CFHC's ready for the next 40 years!!!" Gaye Williams said.



Gaye Williams, CEO of CFHC and Board President, Mr. Roy Tyler, Mayor/City Commissioner of Haines City.

**Submitted by Gaye Williams, CFHC*

Aiming For A Healthy Start!



Healthy Start works to ensure that all pregnant women and newborns are screened for risk factors for infant mortality and poor birth outcomes. The Healthy Start Program provides targeted services for eligible women and infants that are unique to our community and tailored those identified risks. In Hardee, Highlands, and Polk counties, Healthy Start served about 6,500 moms and babies last year. Our additional

program that incorporates goal setting, problem solving, and physical activities to optimize individual behavior change.

The overall goal of C.H.O.I.C.E is to increase self-efficacy and general well being by improving participants' knowledge of nutritional choices that focus on heart and bone healthy foods as well as supportive physical activities.

This program is FREE for participants and organizations that want to host this at their place of employment for staff or clients/patients! For more information please contact Natoy Baker-Robinson, Coordinator, at 863-452-6530 x 301 or natoy.baker@hrhn.org

*Submitted by Natoy-Baker Robinson, HRHN

Congratulations to Tri-County Human Services, Inc. on receiving CARF Accreditation! TCHS staff display the compassion and commitment to clients the organization serves!

Network Sponsors RN for FRHA Conference

Heartland Rural Health Network sponsored Diana Simon, a Registered Nurse, so she could attend the 19th annual Florida Rural Health Association Conference held

programs and initiatives worked to reduce teen pregnancies, link working uninsured pregnant women with insurance and prenatal care, provide safe sleep education and portable cribs to families, and provide evidence-based group prenatal care that increases the chances that newborns will be born at a healthy birth weight.

Healthy Start has contributed to improvements in birth outcomes - Florida's infant mortality rate, while still too high, has declined to its lowest rate of 6.4 per 1,000 live births in 2001. Florida has the lowest infant mortality rate in the southern United States. In our tri-county area, the infant mortality rate was even lower than the state rate at 6.2.

Prematurity, or being born earlier than 37 weeks, is the leading cause of infant death in our community. In Florida in 2011, 28,560 babies were born prematurely in Florida, which is a rate of 13.4. In Hardee, Highlands and Polk counties, 1,073 babies were born prematurely and the rate of prematurity was 12.6. According to the March of Dimes, the average medical costs for a preterm baby are more than 10 times higher than those for a healthy full-term baby. The medical costs for a healthy baby from birth to his first birthday were \$4,551; however, for a preterm baby, the costs were \$49,033.

Research supports Healthy Start's efforts, showing that women who received prenatal care coordination services were found to have significantly better birth outcomes; that the Healthy Start screening process is effective in identifying risks for a low birth weight or preterm infant; and shows that investing in programs for children from before birth to age 5 produces economic benefits and high rates of return.

Last year, Healthy Start received a statewide \$5.4 Million dollar budget cut, which was partially restored this year. In our tri-county area, this cut reduced the number served and the number of services by 7%. Healthy Start seeks to protect Florida's babies and reduce immediate and future costs by fully restoring this budget cut in the upcoming year.

*Submitted by Mary Jo Plews, Healthy Start Coalition

Florida Hospital Wauchula Receives Elite Recognition

The Leapfrog Group's annual list of Top Hospitals was announced on December 4th and included Florida Hospital Wauchula. The announcement came at Leapfrog's Annual Meeting, focusing on transparency as the key to improved hospital safety, and Top Hospital Awards.

"Florida Hospital Wauchula is made up of numerous staff who work hard each day to meet patient needs, keeping them safe in every way possible. We consider the confidence of our patients a sacred trust that we highly prize. We are honored and humbled to be given this recognition by the Leapfrog Group," said Vice President and Florida Hospital Wauchula Administrator Linda Adler.

in Safety Harbor, FL. Ms. Simon presented a Poster Presentation on Obesity Complications & Prevention. The Network received an email from Ms. Simon that stated, "I wanted to let you know how much I appreciate the opportunity to attend the Florida Rural Health Association Annual Summit in Safety Harbor. My poster was a presentation on the prevention of obesity. Health care medical cost can be reduced if we can help prevent diseases caused by obesity. Prevention is the key in healthcare today. Education on healthy diet and increased activity can help to decrease the number of residents who are overweight and obese. It is important to bring awareness to this topic and provide our community with education and encouragement in order to decrease the population of obesity." Diana Simon, RN.



Diana Simon, RN, stands by her Poster Presentation titled "Obesity Complications & Prevention" at the Annual FRHA Conference in Safety Harbor, FL.



"The Leapfrog Top Hospital distinction is by far the most competitive award a hospital can receive. Leapfrog holds hospitals to the highest standards on behalf of our purchaser members and their employees. By achieving the Top Hospital accolade, Florida Hospital Wauchula has demonstrated exemplary performance across all areas of quality and patient safety that are analyzed on the Leapfrog Hospital Survey. This hospital stands out as one consistently providing safe, high quality care, and I would be comfortable sending my family to Florida Hospital Wauchula for care," said Leah Binder, President & CEO of The Leapfrog Group.

Florida Hospital Wauchula was selected as a Top Hospital out of nearly 1,200 hospitals participating in The Leapfrog Group's annual survey. This year, the Top Rural Hospital list includes a record 11 hospitals. Other hospitals reaching this achievement include academic medical centers, teaching hospitals, children's hospitals, and community hospitals in rural, suburban and urban settings. The selection is based on the results of the Leapfrog Group's annual hospital survey, which measures hospitals' performance on patient safety and quality, focusing on three critical areas of hospital care: how patients fare, resource use, and management structures in place to prevent errors. The results of the survey are posted on a website (<http://www.leapfroggroup.org/cp>) open to patients and families, the public, employers, and other purchasers of healthcare.

**Submitted by Linda Adler, Florida Hospital Wauchula*

TD Charitable Foundation Donates to Network



TD Bank, through the TD Charitable Foundation, recently donated \$2,500 to Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc. as part of the bank's commitment to giving back to the community. The mission of HRHN is to increase access to quality healthcare to all rural residents by working with local health and social service providers to help determine the most effective ways to maximize available resources without duplication to help create solutions for identified health concerns impacting our rural communities. The organization will use the funds from the TD Charitable Foundation to help support their Supplemental Nutrition Application Assistance Program. SNAP, also referred to as food stamps, is a valuable program that helps eligible low income individuals purchase wholesome foods that they may have otherwise gone without due to financial hardships. A trained staff member is available on a part time basis to pre-screen individuals for eligibility, guide individuals through the online application process, and answer general application process questions.

"There are many individuals who are not proficient in using the computer to apply online. Our Eligibility Specialist is able to work one on one with clients

STCC Year Round Food Drive

SFSC Student Nurses Association initiated year round, campus-wide Food Drive benefiting indigent and medically needy patients at Samaritan's Touch Care Center. SFSC Student Government Association is partnering with the Student Nurses Association to collect non-perishable foods for the needy in Highlands County. If you are interested in participating, please drop off non-perishable food items to Samaritan's Touch Care Center, 3015 Herring Ave., Sebring 33870.



STCC provides FREE comprehensive health care services to the uninsured and "medically-indigent" in Highlands County (those who are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level). STCC operates with no state or federal funding. Since inception, STCC has provided over \$17.2 million dollars in health care services, to thousands of Highlands County families, through over 30,000 patient visits. This has been accomplished through the generosity of a caring community and our many volunteer providers, physicians and specialists.

to help guide them through the application process on the computer," stated Kelly Johnson, the Network's Executive Director. To schedule an appointment with Niecy Dorsey, Eligibility Specialist, please call 863-452-6530 ext. 303.

A staunch commitment to active involvement in the local community is a vital element of the TD Bank philosophy. TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank® and the TD Charitable Foundation provide financial and other support to affordable housing initiatives, financial literacy and education and the environment, many of which focus on improving the welfare of children and families.



Network Staff Recently Accepted a \$2,500 Donation from the TD Charitable Foundation to support their SNAP program.

Network Receives Grant To Help Support Drug Free Coalitions' Efforts

The Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc., in collaboration with Drug Free Highlands and the Hardee Alliance for Substance Abuse & Teen Pregnancy Prevention, received a federal Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking (STOP) Act grant from the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Administration. This is a four year grant totaling \$193,032. The STOP ACT grant program provides funding for community-based coalitions throughout the country to prevent and reduce alcohol use among youth ages 12-20. The program strengthens collaboration among communities, as well as federal, state, local and tribal governments in efforts to instill an active commitment to prevent underage drinking.

STCC partners with over 150 volunteer providers who donate the following FREE specialty health care services:

Surgery
Diagnostic Imaging
Mammography
Cancer Care
Urology
Cardiology
Infections Disease Wound Care
Physical Therapy
Pulmonology
Gastroenterology Podiatry
Emergency Dental
Optometry
Ophthalmology
Endocrinology
Anesthesiology
Oral Surgery
OBGYN
Osteopathy
Internal Medicine
Rehabilitation Nephrology
Otolaryngology

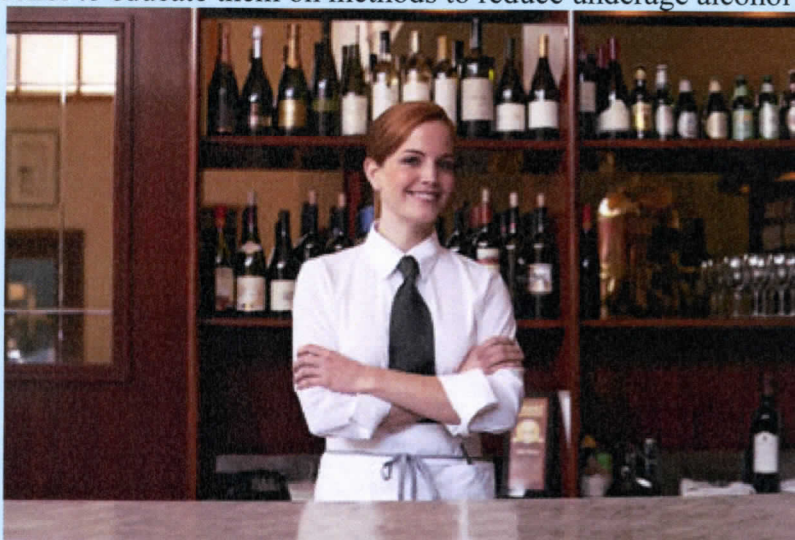
The full scope of services that STCC makes available to eligible County residents is not duplicated by any government-funded clinic or medical provider in the county.

**Submitted by Rachel Nawrocki, STCC*

Celebrating Sweet Success!

Locally, these two coalitions are teaming up to reduce underage drinking by using four environmental strategies. Youth in Hardee and Highlands Counties will have an opportunity to participate in an exciting social media campaign that uses texts to deliver educational messages on underage drinking and alcohol. Project Success, an evidence based program for youth, will be available in cooperation with several community agencies.

The grant will also help support quarterly compliance checks of alcohol in collaboration with local law enforcement. The Primary Retail Education Program (PREP) will also be made available to local merchants that sell and/or serve alcohol to educate them on methods to reduce underage alcohol sales.



The Hardee and Highlands Coalitions are comprised of community leaders, parents, youth, teachers, religious and fraternal organizations, health care and business professionals, law enforcement, and the media who work together to address substance use within their respective counties. The coalitions also work together on a variety of projects to maximize resources.

"We are truly excited about the opportunity to partner with Drug Free Highlands and Hardee ASAPP to reduce alcohol use among youth in these two counties," said Kelly J. Johnson, Heartland Rural Health Network's Executive Director. Jacqueline Rawlings, Drug Free Highlands Coalition Chair stated, "We are thrilled with the news of this grant award. We now have an opportunity to expand the two coalitions' efforts to reduce substance use among youth in our rural communities by having additional resources that are designed to specifically address on underage drinking."

Managing Dental Care at Highlands County Health Department



Palms of Sebring Executive Director Steve Austin (from left), and Palms Executive Chef Mac Gentleman, accept the trophy as overall winner of the Cornerstone Hospice Sweet Wars 2012 event from event sponsor Attorney Michael Keiber and Cornerstone Hospice Regional Director of Development Kathleen Border recently. The event was a huge success with five local assisted living chefs presenting decadent desserts to a packed Bert J. Harris Agricultural Center.

**Submitted by Kathleen Border, Cornerstone Hospice Foundation*



The statewide implementation of managed care dental plans for children's services took effect on October 1, 2012 in most of central Florida, including Highlands County. The two dental plans that have contracted with the state are MCNA and DentaQuest. Highlands County DOH is

working with DentaQuest to continue to provide the finest dental care for our patients. We will provide the same services and level of care that we have in the past, including x-rays and exams, cleanings, fluoride treatments, sealant, fillings and extractions. Parents and guardians wishing to continue to use Children's Dental Care of Highlands for their child's dentistry need to be sure they are enrolled with DentaQuest. Individuals needing to be reassigned can call the Medicaid Helpline at 888-367-6554, 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. M-F or go online at www.medicaidoptions.net. Individuals with questions about the DentaQuest plan can call 888-468-5509 or go online at www.dentaquestflorida.com. If your organization is interested in a short presentation you can email Highlands County DOH dental director Stephen Ebner at Stephen_Ebner@doh.state.fl.us for details.

Several of HCHD staff members recently attended a two day training course to enable us to offer nitrous oxide sedation to our patients. This will allow us to treat patients who are somewhat apprehensive and fearful. HCHD will be able to offer this safe and effective sedation technique beginning on or about December 1, 2012. As always, we strive for the best care options for the residents of Highlands County.

**Article submitted by Barbara Turner, HCHD*

Network Staff Attend CFHC 40th Annual Celebration



Kelly J. Johnson, HRHN

Network Recognizes Warren Santander

On Wednesday, November 28th, the Heartland Rural Health Network board of directors recognized Warren Santander for his dedication and commitment to the network over the past 12 years. Mr. Santander served as the Network's Executive Director in 2002 and after taking a position at a local hospital, resigned as Executive Director and served on the board of directors until mid-2012. Mr. Santander held positions of President and Past President for several years. During the meeting, board members and Mr. Santander shared some of their memories. The board presented Mr. Santander with a plaque to recognize his ongoing support of the Network in his various capacities as employee, director, and officer of the corporation.

Executive Director, and Natoy Baker-Robinson, HRHN Coordinator of the Diabetes Master Clinician Program, attended Central Florida Health Care's Annual Meeting Celebrating 40 years of quality care for our rural communities.

2012-2013 Network Members

Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc. would like to welcome back Highlands Regional Medical Center as a member and welcome newest member, Drug Free Highlands to the Network.

The Network would also like to recognize our other members and say "thank you" for your continued membership in 2012-2013!

Central Florida Area Health Education Center

Central Florida Health Care, Inc.

Charlotte County Health Department

DeSoto County Health Department

DeSoto Memorial Hospital

Drug Free Highlands

Florida Hospital Heartland Division



Blake Warren (left), HRHN President & Executive Director Central Florida AHEC, presents Warren Santander (center), with a plaque thanking him for his many years of service on Heartland Rural Health Network's board of directors. Also present (from left to right) were Kelly J. Johnson, HRHN Executive Director, Mary Kay Burns, Highlands and DeSoto County Health Officer, Anthony Stahl, VP Florida Hospital Lake Placid, Linda Adler, Administrator, Florida Hospital Wauchula, Gaye Williams, CEO Central Florida Health Care, and Robert Palussek, Associate Administrator, Highlands Regional Medical Center

Two Local Practices & Two CHWs Receive Recognition for Quality Diabetes Care

Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc. hosted a graduation event on Friday, December 7th at Inn on the Lakes in Sebring, FL. to recognize two local providers and the Network's Community Health Workers for achieving excellence in quality diabetes care for rural populations in Highlands and Hardee Counties. Kelly J. Johnson, HRHN Executive Director, opened the event with a welcome to Dr. Kathleen Welch Wilson and team from Hardee Family Medical Group and Dr. Miguel Beltre and team from Sun N Lake Medical Group as well as Dr. Edward Shahady, DMCP Medical Director, and Tamara Cruz and Judy Vekasy, HRHN's Community Health Workers. Natoy Baker-Robinson, DMCP Coordinator, explained her commitment to this program and to the providers and staff involved in the DMCP. Those present were recognized with individual certificates as well as both practices being recognized by the Florida Academy of Family Physicians

Florida Hospital Lake Placid

Florida Hospital Wauchula

Hardee County Health
Department

Healthy Start Coalition of
Hardee, Highlands & Polk
Counties, Inc.

Highlands County Health
Department

Highlands Regional Medical
Center

Polk County Health
Department

Manatee County Rural Health
Services, Inc.

Redlands Christian Migrant
Association

Samaritan's Touch Care
Center

Pioneer Medical Center

Tampa General Hospital

Tri-County Human Services,
Inc.

For more information on
joining the Heartland Rural
Health Network please visit
hrhn.org or call 863-452-
6530.

Foundation as Centers of Diabetes Excellence.

Dr. Edward Shahady, DMCP Medical Director, reviewed a PowerPoint that reflected each practice's data within the diabetes registry. He discussed opportunities and successes of both practices. Tamara Cruz and Judy Vekasy were also presented with Diabetes University certificates. Upon distributing the certificates the floor was opened for comments. Dr. Kathleen Welch-Wilson commented, "I can see the progression at each (patient's) visit after they see a CHW." Dr. Miguel Beltre stated, "because of this program my medical office has changed how we treat diabetes."

The Diabetes Master Clinician Program is a team effort and the dedication to serving patients within a community based setting helps contribute to the overall achievement of diabetes goals and the success of the DMCP as a whole. HRHN thanks all providers in Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto County that continue to utilize the DMCP and CHW program. For further information on the DMCP please contact Natoy Baker-Robinson, Coordinator, at 863-452-6530 x 301.



Dr. Miguel Beltre & Medical Staff at Sun N Lake Medical Group Accept Their Certificate From Dr. Edward Shahady (far right) Recognizing Their Practice as a Center of Diabetes Excellence.

Follow-up Links

[Heartland Rural Health Network](#)
[Florida Rural Health Association](#)
[National Rural Health Association](#)



Dr. Kathleen Welch Wilson & Medical Staff at Hardee Family Medical Group Accept Their Certificate From Dr. Edward Shahady (far right) Recognizing Their Practice As A Center of Diabetes Excellence.



Tamara Cruz (2nd from left) and Judith Vekasy (fourth from left), Community Health Workers, Accept Their Diabetes University Certificates from Kelly Johnson, Natoy Baker-Robinson, and Dr. Edward Shahady (left to right).