This summer was filled with public health celebrations and awareness activities. This week we are celebrating National Health Center Week and earlier in the summer we celebrated the national 50th anniversary of newborn screening and promoted the need for more blood donation.

On August 15, in recognition of National Health Center Week, I visited a community health center in Keansburg run by the Visiting Nurses Association of Central Jersey, and Deputy Commissioner Dr. Arturo Brito visited the Newark Community Health Center. Together we are highlighting how Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) across New Jersey are improving the health of residents. Health fairs and free health screenings, at nearly 100 events, are taking place across the state in celebration of National Health Center Week.

Governor Christie’s FY2014 budget provides a record $50 million to community health centers, which are a critical part of our health care safety net—especially for the state’s most vulnerable. They provide primary medical care, dental care, prenatal care, mental health services, vision and pharmacy services, as well as treatment and counseling for HIV/AIDS, case management, and cancer screenings for different types of cancer including breast and cervical.

Governor Christie recognized the importance of our community health centers by signing a proclamation celebrating National Health Center Week. It can be viewed at: http://nj.gov/health/documents/hcw_proclamation.pdf.

I also participated in a special event at Saint Peter’s University Medical Center in New Brunswick on July 29, celebrating the National 50th Anniversary of Newborn Screening. During the event, I met with several families whose babies benefited from the early detection of rare biochemical or genetic conditions. New Jersey has screened 2.4 million babies over the past 20 years. Of those, 6,463 were identified with a biochemical or genetic condition. Hearing loss was detected in another 1,106 babies between 2002 and 2011.

The Department hosted a traveling national exhibit about newborn screening that was on display at the event. The exhibit also traveled to the Turtle Back Zoo in West Orange and to a Camden County library in Atco, which hosted a special “teddy bear” clinic, where youngsters were able to have their bears tested for newborn disorders.

New Jersey is a national leader in newborn screening. In 2011, Governor Christie signed legislation making New Jersey the first state to implement...
Governor Chris Christie announces the first post-Superstorm Sandy buyout offers to Sayreville homeowners on July 16.

Governor Chris Christie, First Lady Mary Pat Christie and Jon Bon Jovi announce a $1 million donation to the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund from Jon Bon Jovi at Borough Hall in Sayreville, N.J. on Monday, July 8.

$6,800,000,000 Total Federal assistance to New Jersey

$5,000,000,000 National Flood Insurance Program payments made on claims to date

$1,829,520,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

$1,000,000,000 Federal money set aside for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Shore Protection Projects

$798,500,000 Small Business Administration Disaster Loans approved for homeowners, renters and businesses

$624,700,000 FEMA Public Assistance grants to communities and some nonprofit organizations that serve the public

$402,200,000 FEMA grants approved for New Jersey individuals and households

$300,000,000 Federal money available to buy out Sandy-damaged and repetitively flood-damaged homes

$37,000,000 Financial commitments to the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund

$26,000,000 Employer-focused grants made available through the Hire New Jersey Recovery Plan

$15,600,000 National Emergency Grants to fund the Christie Administration’s plan to hire unemployed New Jersey residents to assist with clean-up and recovery efforts

96% Total insured claims closed including: homeowners, commercial property, personal auto, commercial auto, and business interruption, and others

90% Federal cost-share for projects funded by FEMA’s Public Assistance grant program

79% Total flood claims closed
New Jersey Childhood Obesity Rates Fall

New analysis of childhood obesity data reveals that one in eight US preschool children are obese. In 2011, 19 states, including NJ, reported decreases in obesity among low-income preschoolers compared to 2008. NJ is also one of six states that saw more than a percentage point decrease in obesity rates.

Read more at: http://www.cdc.gov/VitalSigns/ChildhoodObesity/

August is National Awareness Immunization Month

The past decade has seen substantial declines in cases, hospitalizations, deaths, and health-care costs associated with vaccine-preventable diseases. New vaccines (i.e., rotavirus, quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate, herpes zoster, pneumococcal conjugate, and human papillomavirus vaccines, as well as tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis vaccine for adults and adolescents) were introduced, bringing to 17 the number of diseases targeted by U.S. immunization policy. A recent economic analysis indicated that vaccination of each baby born in the United States with the current childhood immunization schedule prevents approximately 42,000 deaths and 20 million cases of disease, with net savings of nearly $14 billion in direct costs and $69 billion in total societal costs.

Learn about National Awareness Immunization Month events taking place in New Jersey at http://nj.gov/health/news/2013/approved/20130805a.html

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$17.6 Million in Grants to Improve Health

Over the past several weeks, the Department has announced the award of more than $17.6 million in grants that build upon the state’s leadership role in funding research that may ultimately lead to improved treatments and cures for many devastating diseases and injuries.

**Chronic Disease Prevention - $9.4 million:**
More than $9.4 million in federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funds will be used by the Department to prevent diabetes, heart disease, obesity and other chronic diseases; and help those with risk factors better manage their chronic conditions.

Commissioner O’Dowd said of the award, “This funding will help the Department and its community partners prevent chronic conditions and move to a more integrated approach that helps people comprehensively manage chronic disease so they can lead healthier lives.”

Read more at: [http://www.state.nj.us/health/news/2013/approved/20130708a.html](http://www.state.nj.us/health/news/2013/approved/20130708a.html)

**Traumatic Brain Injury - $3.8 million:**
More than $3.8 million in grants approved by the New Jersey Commission on Brain Injury research will be used to develop treatments and cures for disabilities associated traumatic brain injury.

Read More: [http://www.state.nj.us/health/news/2013/approved/20130708b.html](http://www.state.nj.us/health/news/2013/approved/20130708b.html)

**Spinal Cord Injury Research - $2.9 million:**
More than $2.9 million in grants were awarded by the New Jersey Commission on Spinal Cord Research to fund the development of treatments and cures for paralysis and other spinal cord related diseases.


**Health Information Network - $1.5 million**
A grant of $1.5 million was approved by the Department for the creation and operation of a statewide network that will enable the sharing of patient health information electronically. The New Jersey Health Information Network (NJHIN) will connect regional health information organizations that are currently exchanging data among local healthcare providers.

Read more at: [http://www.state.nj.us/health/news/2013/approved/20130711a.html](http://www.state.nj.us/health/news/2013/approved/20130711a.html)

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Mid-July was a Jersey Scorcher!

Hot, humid air hit New Jersey during a long-lasting heat wave from July 14-20, with maximum temperature ranging from 89-96 degrees across the state. Not surprisingly, heat related illnesses (HRI) jumped significantly during this time.

During the heat wave, a total of 150 heat related illnesses were reported to the Department. The Department receives heat related illness data from 75 of the state’s 81 hospital emergency departments.

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![Heat Related Illness Chart](chart.png)
July 11 — Commissioner O’Dowd spoke at the New Jersey Technology Council’s Health Information Technology Summit in Princeton.

July 17 — Commissioner O’Dowd addressed the Commerce and Industry Association’s Health Committee to provide an update on the state of health care in New Jersey.

July 17 — Commissioner O’Dowd gave an update on Sandy recovery efforts to the Bergen County Long-Term Recovery group.

July 29 — Commissioner O’Dowd highlighted a $1.6 million budget increase for New Jersey’s New Born Screening Program in the FY 2014 budget and celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the National Newborn Screening at Saint Peters Hospital.

July 30 — Commissioner O’Dowd spoke at a press conference to highlight the need for blood at a Super Community Blood Drive at Johnson & Johnson headquarters in New Brunswick.

August 7 — Commissioner O’Dowd spoke at a press conference at the Delran Farmers Market, with Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher and Patricia Dombroski, Regional Administrator, USDA, in celebration of Farmers Market Week.

August 15 — Deputy Commissioner Dr. Arturo Brito participated in a celebration of National Health Center Week at the Newark Community Health Center to congratulate health centers for everything they do to protect the health of residents in New Jersey.

August 15 — Commissioner O’Dowd visited a health center in Keansburg run by the Visiting Nurses Association of Central Jersey where she highlighted a record $50 million in funding to Federally Qualified Health Centers as part of the FY2014 budget.

Staff Notes

Beverly Sce, Ph.D., Director of the Children’s Oral Health Program presented Project REACH, Reducing Early Childhood Caries through Access to Care and Health Education at the 2nd National Nursing Oral Health Summit in June. Project REACH is now featured as a New Jersey success story on the Oral Health Nursing Education Practice website.

Frank Gordon, Laboratory Safety Officer, took part in biosafety and biocontainment training improve upon scientific, regulatory, biocontainment, biosafety, and engineering challenges associated with working in a biocontainment facility. The training took place on June 24-28.

Karen Pawlish, and Lisa Paddock, Research Scientists presented abstracts at the 2013 North American Association of Central Cancer Registries annual meeting. The meeting is a venue for cancer professionals to collaborate and find better ways to shape the future of cancer surveillance. The event took place June 8—14.
newborn screening for Chronic Congenital Heart Defects (CCHD). A study published in the national journal *Pediatrics* on July 15 found that in the first nine months after implementation, three babies with previously unsuspected CCHD were identified as well as 17 infants with other potentially serious conditions. The *Pediatrics* article can be found at: http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2013-0269.

More than 100,000 babies born in the state each year are tested for 54 genetic conditions. New Jersey is increasing its investment in this life-saving program. This year’s budget includes an additional $1.6 million to expand the number of newborn screening tests from 54 to 60 biochemical and genetic disorders. As a result of Emma’s Law, signed by Governor Christie, new testing will add five lysosomal storage disorders which impair the body's ability to break down certain substances like proteins. Testing will also begin for Severe Combined Immunodeficiency, which prevents newborns from fighting infections. The condition is fatal if not detected.

This summer the Department is also making a major push to improve blood donations in New Jersey. This past May, the state embarked on a unique eight-month *Super Community Blood Drive* campaign in collaboration with the 2014 NY/NJ Super Bowl Host Committee to increase the region’s blood supply. Through this partnership, thousands of blood drives are taking place in New York and New Jersey in the run-up to Super Bowl XLVIII at MetLife Stadium.

Every person who donates blood in New Jersey between May 24 and January 17, 2014, will receive a red Super Community Blood Drive wristband and the opportunity to win tickets to Super Bowl XLVIII.

To help promote the need for more blood donation, I visited a blood drive at Johnson & Johnson world headquarters in New Brunswick July 31. Johnson & Johnson Chairman & CEO Alex Gorsky donated blood during the drive along with employees and local area residents.

In New Jersey, the *Super Community Blood Drive* is conducted in association with the New Jersey Workplace Blood Donor Coalition, which I co-chair with Kevin Rigby, Vice President of Public Affairs at Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation. Together with the Host Committee, we are calling on New Jerseyans to “Give Blood and Join the World’s Biggest Huddle” by donating at their workplace, a community blood drive or any one of New Jersey’s blood centers or hospital blood collection sites.

Last year, our summer blood drive increased donations in New Jersey by 11 percent, and this year I hope we can build upon that success and do even better. To find information on where to give blood, visit: www.njsave3lives.com.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and take time to visit the New Jersey Shore. The businesses that have worked hard to recover from Sandy will appreciate your patronage.
Is Prostate Cancer Screening for Me?

By Thomas L. Jang, MD, MPH

Over the past few years, significant controversy has arisen regarding the role of screening men for prostate cancer with prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing. There is no question that screening detects cancers at an earlier stage, when it could be potentially cured, or safely followed. So why the controversy?

According to the American Cancer Society, prostate cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in men, other than skin cancer, and the second leading cause of cancer death in males. In New Jersey 7,200 men are expected to be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year and about 750 men will die from the disease.

In October 2011, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) issued initial recommendations discouraging the use of PSA testing and issued final recommendations in May 2012 against PSA screening for healthy men. The USPSTF indicated there was “moderate or high certainty that the service (PSA testing) has no benefit or that the harms outweigh the benefits.” When these recommendations were published, it caused significant confusion among the medical community and among patients and their families regarding the value of PSA testing.

Factors that should be considered when interpreting these recommendations include:

1) The panel issuing these recommendations did not include urologists or cancer specialists who most commonly diagnose and treat prostate cancer at all stages.
2) The task force did not consider studies showing the 40 percent reduction in prostate cancer deaths since the widespread use of PSA in the early 1990’s, a finding that is in large part, because of PSA screening.
3) When issuing their recommendations, the panel did not consider high-risk populations, such as men with a family history of prostate cancer or African-American men.

Though not a perfect test, PSA remains the most effective screening for physicians to assist in the fight against prostate cancer.

To see if PSA screening is right for you, talk to your doctor about the rationale, risks and benefits of PSA screening. To ensure attentive care to our community, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and its flagship facility Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital will join forces in September to offer free prostate cancer screenings.

The screenings, open to men 40 to 75 years, will be held from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on September 22, 23 and 24 at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, 195 Little Albany Street in New Brunswick. An appointment is necessary. One can register for the free screening by calling 1-888-MD-RWJUH (1-888-637-9584).

Thomas L. Jang, MD, MPH, is a urologic oncologist at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and an assistant professor of surgery at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.