



**COMMUNITY HEALTH  
of SOUTH FLORIDA, INC.**

*"Patient Care Comes First"*

August 2014

# HEALTHY BITS



Healthy Bits — A Newsletter Published by Community Health of South Florida Inc.

## LINKS program honors 70 children in first graduation

When 3-year-old Ilithya Puente heard her name called at the first annual LINKS graduation she ran down the aisle smiling and cheering to accept her diploma.

Puente was the first child to be enrolled in LINKS, an acronym for: Learn, Inform, Navigate, Knowledge and Support. The Community Health of South Florida Inc. program was created to screen and assess developmental concerns.

"It is very refreshing," said Elvia Puente, Ilithya's mother. "You learn skills to be a parent and also as your child grows and develops they give you an idea of what she is supposed to be doing."

Developmental specialists identified speech delays in little Ilithya and connected her family to a qualified speech therapist to help.

"She talks more now," said her mother. "It's very important for me because it makes me feel that my daughter is important to the program. They gave her the proper attention that she needed."

Dozens of proud children and their families attended the graduation ceremony on July 10 at the Doris Ison Health Center. In total, 70 children graduated from the program. For most, it was the first of many graduations to come. For their parents, it was an important milestone in their child's health and the partnership that they hold with CHI.



*Ilithya Puente smiles as she poses with her mother, Elvia Puente and Ferda Owens, a CHI employee with the LINKS program.*

"It is very exciting to think that these children were so tiny when they came, just babies," said Mireya Mayor, Vice President for Behavioral Health Services at CHI. "Now you see them walking, talking and I think it's also exciting to see this was through a grant and when you see that we have achieved such success from the program it's a good feeling of achievement."

The program was made possible by a grant through the Children's Trust. The goal was to identify problems in children between birth to the age of three and correct those issues.

It involves a team of experts including the child's pediatrician, educational specialists, developmental specialists and others.

"We are linked between the doctor and you," said Ferda Owens, mental health specialist in the program. "We will come out and visit you in your home to make sure the baby is developing appropriately."

Between home visits, doctor visits and group educational classes LINKS helped to build a rich learning environment for both parent and child for the past three years. The lessons learned with the first class have helped to create an even stronger program for the upcoming graduating classes.

To participate in the LINKS program, your child must be enrolled by the age of 2 months and be a pediatric patient at CHI. You can contact the LINKS department at (305)252-4846.

# A Message from the President

August is an exciting time for us. We are celebrating National Health Center Week from Aug. 9 through Aug. 16 and CHI is hosting a series of events to highlight the important role that Community Health Centers play in our local neighborhoods. I know that CHI is much more than just a health center. We are educators, healers and a vehicle to connect people to the much needed resources that are out there to help them.

We will host several health fairs to bring many of those resources to the community. The health fairs will include valuable services, health screenings, food, fun, giveaways and entertainment for the whole family. The fun begins with the Henry Schein Health Fair on Saturday, Aug. 9 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at CHI's Doris Ison Health Center, 10300 SW 216 St., Miami, FL 33190.

Just a few days later on Tuesday, Aug. 12, we will host a health care forum that will have vital information on the role that Community Health Centers play and the Affordable Care Act. The free event, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Center, 10950 SW 211 St., Miami, FL 33189, includes dinner. The keynote speaker is Tom Van Coverden, President and CEO of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). He is a very dynamic speaker and you definitely don't want to miss what he has to say. We will also have local and national legislators there to talk about the ever changing political climate in healthcare. These issues affect all of our lives.

Every population is different and we believe in making sure some of our most vulnerable groups get the specialized help that they need. That is why we have tailored our program to include migrants and the homeless.

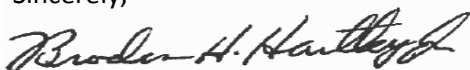
On Wednesday, Aug. 13 we will host a health fair geared toward our migrant population at the Everglades Community Center, 19316 SW 380th St., Homestead, FL 33033.

We then will do a special health fair geared toward our homeless population on Thursday, Aug. 14 from noon to 3 p.m. at Verde Gardens, 12550 SW 282 St., Homestead, FL 33033.

Our wrap up for all the fun ends with two events on August 16: our School Physical Day and the Back-to-School Health Fair. We will offer school physicals for just \$30 plus free immunizations at all of our health centers on the 16th. Then from noon to 4 p.m. that same day we will host a health fair at Southland Mall, 20505 S. Dixie Highway, Cutler Bay, FL 33189.

So help us spread the word. Tell everyone you know about all the good things that we have planned. It is sure to be a grand time that will likely benefit the lives of your entire family.

Sincerely,



Brodes H. Hartley Jr.



**School Physicals for just \$30**  
**At all 10 CHI locations.**  
**Call 786-272-2100**

# Doctors earn Lifetime Achievement Award, appointment

Dr. Gloriana “Nana” Lopez is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA). She will receive the award at a luncheon during the National Primary Oral Health Conference on Aug. 19, at Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

The NNOHA presents the award, among others, to those individuals who have made significant contributions to quality health care for underserved populations.

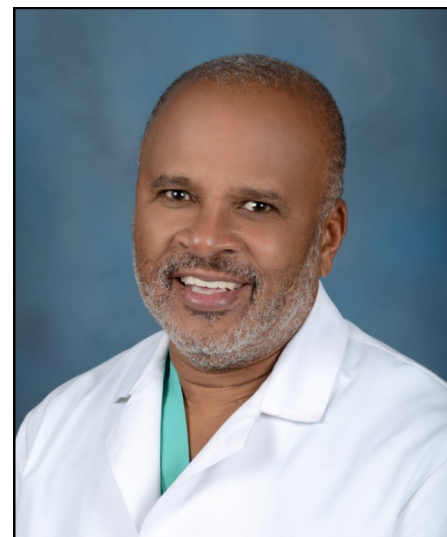
“Thank you so much for your service to the underserved and to advancing access to oral health for those who need the care the most,” said Jodi Padilla, a NNOHA representative. “We sincerely congratulate you on receiving this award in recognition of your exemplary leadership.”

Dr. Lopez, with CHI since 2010, is a dentist at CHI’s Marathon location.

“My mission in life is to serve all, especially the neediest. My best days



*Dr. Gloriana Lopez, a dentist at CHI’s Marathon Location, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from National Network for Oral Health Access Aug. 19.*



*Dr. Gerald Pierre was promoted to Assistant Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Jackson South Community Hospital.*

are when I get to see the positive results in my patients of all ages,” she said. “I’ve been blessed with the ability to help people.”

Many of CHI’s patients struggle with expensive dental care, often waiting until a cavity turns into a root canal when the situation is often beyond saving the tooth.

“There is a mountain of disease out there, particularly with those who are low-income. We chip away a tiny bit of that mountain but we need to encourage preventative care,” she said. “Preventative care is the only way to knock down that mountain.”

Board certified in public health dentistry, she was trained in epidemiology at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She is a founding member of the Hispanic Dental Association.

In other news, CHI’s Dr. Gerald Pierre was promoted to Assistant Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Jackson South Community Hospital. His duties as assistant chief include making departmental decisions and sitting on

the medical executive committee at Jackson South.

“It’s an honor,” said Dr. Pierre. “I think it’s a reflection of the relationship between CHI and Jackson.”

Pierre has been with CHI for a decade and works out of Women’s Services at the Martin Luther King Center in Homestead.

“I think that’s a pretty exciting opportunity for him,” said Dr. Molrine Tracey, Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at CHI. “He is an excellent physician with approximately 20 years of experience. He is an amazing colleague and wonderful person to work with and always someone you can go to for assistance when needed.”

Dr. Pierre is also a faculty member in the OB/GYN Practice Program of CHI’s Teaching Health Center. Board certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, he is a fellow of both the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the National Health Services Corps. He is fluent in English, French and Creole and has a working knowledge of Spanish.

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# August is National Immunization Awareness month

It's August and that means a new school year is approaching.

The words "back to school" bring visions of fighting crowds for those special school supply deals, stuffing backpacks and choosing the perfect outfit for that first day.

But more importantly, back to school represents the time to make sure your children's immunizations are up to date.

"Keeping a child's immunizations updated is essential. A child who is not protected by immunizations is at risk for disease which can be spread to their classmates and the



community, as well," said Hyacinth Grey, an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner with CHI's school based program.

Vaccines actually boost the immune response and cause inflammatory cells to go into action and fight infection. An immune response



sometimes produces a low grade fever or rash. But, Grey said, the benefits far outweigh the risks.

"The classroom is highly susceptible to disease outbreaks because illnesses are so easily transmitted from child to child," Grey warns. "If a child has not had all the required immunizations

they will not be allowed to attend school."

In fact, by the time a child is 4 years old they should have received 20 vaccines. There are still a lot more vaccines that they get under school requirements.

Immunizations are free at all 10 CHI sites on School Physical and Immunization Day on Saturday, Aug. 16. From now up to that day, school physicals are just \$30. School Physical Day is from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at nearly all the sites except at the Marathon and Tavernier Health Centers that will hold School Physical Day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. To schedule a visit to update your child's immunizations, please call CHI at (305) 252-4820.

## Double the fun: Twin boys born to two CHI employees



Two CHI employees are the proud parents of twin boys born on July 12 at 2:57 p.m.

The father, Roberto Perdomo, works in CHI's environmental department and the mother, Raquel Guerra, is a Clerk III in the Behavioral Health Department.

Jeremy Perdomo was born weighing in at 6 pounds, 8 ounces and Jonathan Perdomo weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces.

Everyone is doing well. We congratulate them and wish them all the best!

*Roberto Perdomo and Raquel Guerra hold their babies minutes after they were born on July 12.*

# New student volunteer program encourages service

Community service for teens is often a requirement for graduating high school and it's a great way for students to build their resumes and skill sets. The new youth volunteer program developed by CHI is proving to be a life-changing experience, one that allows teens to expand their horizons and foster meaningful relationships.

When the Community Health of South Florida Inc. Youth Volunteer program began, there we stood; 12 of us from different schools, different ages and for all different reasons. Some of us desire to have future careers in health care, some seek a meaningful experience to add to college applications, and some simply want to get out of the house for the summer. Whatever the reason, this experience has been positive and has brought us together in a way we could never have predicted. Since we are the first group of volunteers at Doris Ison CHI, we decided to call ourselves the Originals aka the "OGs."

We had an amazing journey through orientation, learning about each other and the many different pieces of the CHI puzzle. No one part of the health center could run well without all of the other pieces. We learned how the motto "Patient Care Comes First" is



Alecsys Proctor-Turner, left, Adriana Fiorilo, Toni-Ann Wilson and Jaelle Turner are some of the first student volunteers for CHI's Summer Youth Volunteer Program.

actually practiced daily throughout the center. We are placed at the front desk to work on our customer service skills, which is very important because we are the first faces that clients see when entering the facility. For the rest of the summer, we will get to work in different departments of the health center including administration, the lab, the pharmacy, IT and others.

"I aspire to be a plastic surgeon after my aunt," said Adriana Fiorilo, a junior at Coral Reef Senior High School. "I hope to gain knowledge in medical

areas that will help when I am applying to colleges."

She plans to work in medicine in her future and feels that she is on the right track being a part of the volunteer program at CHI.

But for Alecsys Proctor-Turner, a junior at New World School of the Arts, the focus is different.

For her, it's about changing lives. "I don't necessarily want to work in a Health Center," said Proctor-Turner. "But I hope to gain information that will help me build a successful nonprofit organization."

Even though we are all here for different reasons, we are enjoying this program and appreciating the people who are making this happen for us. To be a part of something that is just so superb is a great honor. We are learning so many things that will make us successful in whatever we do in the future. Collectively, we feel that it is important to volunteer and as citizens of the world, we are obligated to give back to our fellow man. Thank you CHI for this wonderful experience.

— Written by student volunteers.



Student Volunteer Adriana Fiorilo gets direction from Pharmacist Samuel James. She will rotate through several departments during her volunteering this summer.

# New treatment may soon eradicate Hepatitis C

When Thomas Yelvington got into a car accident, he never imagined that a life-saving blood transfusion would silently infect him with Hepatitis C.

“When I tested positive for Hepatitis C, I was surprised. How could this have happened?” he wondered. “I thought back to that blood transfusion and realized that’s where I got it.”

There have been dramatic medical developments recently with Hep C. In fact, there are treatments now that claim a 98 percent cure rate.

“Medication now available not only treats, but cures the Hep C virus with practically no side effects,” said Dr. Arnold Oper, CHI Family Medicine. “And this is possible in only 12 weeks!”

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is an infectious disease that primarily affects the liver. It is the most common blood-borne infection in the United States. The infection is often asymptomatic, but chronically can lead to scarring of the liver and ultimately to cirrhosis.

Currently there are 140 million people with Hep C; compare that to 40 million with HIV, Dr. Oper said. The Hep C medicine does not negatively interact with most HIV medicines, so a patient with both HIV and Hep C can still get the Hep C cured.

The primary means of the virus transmission in this country is by intravenous drug users sharing needles. Blood transfusions from unscreened donors are also a source, with sexual transmission comprising about 4 percent of new diagnoses, Dr. Oper explained.



Dr. Oper explains a new Hep C treatment.



Thomas Yelvington is nearly cured from Hepatitis C due to a new treatment program.

work in health care. Don’t share your toothbrush, razor, nail clippers, diabetes supplies or anything else, like a drinking straw that might have blood on it.

“I didn’t know I had Hepatitis C. I had no symptoms at all,” Yelvington said, adding that he initially was treated at a local hospital. “These medications gave me mood swings and other horrible side effects that were destroying my life. I snapped at everyone and became very angry. I told Dr. Oper to just let me die.”

After a year of unsuccessful treatments, Dr. Oper introduced Yelvington to a new form of treatment.

“This new plan was great. Instead of multiple injections and many pills a day, this was just one pill a day. With no side effects at all,” Yelvington said.

“After just three months the virus was out of my blood system,” he added. “One positive thing from this experience is I was forced to no longer drink alcohol. I drink a lot of Crystal Lite, and my beer is now a frosty.”

In another few months, it is expected that the virus will also be out of his liver completely. He will, in essence, be cured.

*“It’s amazing to know  
that Hepatitis C will  
soon be eradicated,  
just like smallpox.  
This is the best thing  
since sliced bread!”*

*– Dr. Arnold Oper,  
CHI Family Medicine*

“It’s amazing to know that Hep C may soon be eradicated, just like smallpox,” Dr. Oper said.

“This cure is the most exciting thing that has happened this year. It’s a new dawn for those of us in the infectious disease field of medicine,” Dr. Oper exclaimed. “This is the best thing since sliced bread!”

# Dengue Fever makes its first appearance in Florida

After years of plaguing more than one-third of the world's population, the dengue fever now threatens South Florida. On July 9, 2014 the Florida Department of Health has reported the first case of dengue fever in Miami-Dade County this year. The patient has since fully recovered.

Dengue fever is a mosquito-borne tropical disease transmitted by the bite of an Aedes mosquito infected with the virus," said Tashara Jean, CHI ARNP. "The mosquito becomes infected when it bites a person with the dengue virus in their blood. It can't be spread directly from one person to another."


Also called breakbone fever, this disease is the leading cause of illness and death in the tropics and sub-tropics. The Centers for Disease Control reports that as many as an astounding 400 million cases of dengue fever occur worldwide every year.

Typically, people infected with the dengue virus are asymptomatic, or have very mild symptoms. Only about 5 percent are more severe. The incubation period ranges from 3 to 14 days, with 4 to 7 being the most common.


Most cases in the United States occur in people who contracted the infection while traveling abroad. But the risk is increasing for people in the southeast of the United States.

## Rising risk of dengue fever

*The chances that people living in temperate climates could contract dengue – a mosquito-borne fever common in the tropics – are increasing as a carrier's range expands.*



**U.S. range of "Asian tiger" mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*), one carrier**



*Aedes albopictus*

### Symptoms, treatment

- Sudden fever, severe headache, muscle and joint pain, nausea and vomiting, rash
- Can lead to hemorrhaging, which can be fatal
- Treated with rest, fluids, pain relievers

Source: World Health Organization, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Purdue University  
Graphic: Pat Carr, Lee Hulteng

"There are not yet any vaccines to prevent infection of dengue fever. The most effective protection measures are those that avoid mosquito bites," Jean said. "When outside, cover your skin with clothing when mosquitos are active. Wear repellent and use mosquito netting to cover children until 2 months old."

Other suggestions for prevention include covering your doors and windows with screens. And don't

give mosquitos a place to breed by removing any standing water around your yard. Regularly change the water in outdoor bird baths and pet dishes.

Symptoms include fever over 101 degrees, headache, muscle and joint pains, nausea and vomiting, pain behind the eyes, loss of appetite, abdominal pain and a rash similar to the measles.

## **Fun Fact:** Funny Bone... it's no laughing matter!

Did you ever hit your elbow in just the right spot and found it not so funny? To understand why this happens, you need to know the anatomy of the elbow.

The funny bone isn't actually a bone at all. Running down the inside part of your elbow is a nerve called the ulnar nerve. This extends from the hand to the shoulder and is exposed just above the elbow.

This nerve communicates with the brain and lets it know about feelings in the fourth and fifth fingers. It is also

one of the nerves that controls some of the movements of the hand.

That funny feeling you get when you hit that area of your elbow is the ulnar nerve bumping up against the humerus, the long bone that begins at your elbow and runs up to your shoulder.

The ulnar is the only exposed nerve in the human body. Bone, muscles or ligaments protect all other nerves. Hitting your funny bone doesn't do any damage to your elbow or ulnar nerve.

The name funny bone eventually stuck because humerus sounds the same as humorous,

which of course means funny, and tapping this area feels kind of funny. The funny bone has the distinction of being the only bone in the body that can't be broken.



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### CHI's locations from North to South

COMING SOON:  
West Kendall Health Center  
13540 SW 135th Ave.  
Miami, Florida 33186

Coconut Grove Health Center  
3831 Grand Ave.  
Miami, Florida 33133  
(786) 245-2700

South Miami Health Center  
6350 Sunset Drive  
South Miami, Florida 33143  
(786) 293-5500

West Perrine Health Center  
18255 Homestead Ave.  
Perrine, Florida 33157  
(305) 234-7676

Doris Ison Health Center  
10300 SW 216th St.  
Miami, Florida 33190  
(305) 253-5100

Naranja Health Center  
13805 SW 264th St.  
Naranja, Florida 33032  
(305) 258-6813

South Dade Health Center  
13600 SW 312th St.  
Homestead, Florida 33033  
(305) 242-6069

MLK Clinica Campesina  
810 W. Mowry Drive  
Homestead, Florida 33030  
(305) 248-4334

Everglades Health Center  
19300 SW 376th Street  
Florida City, Florida 33034  
(305) 246-4607



Tavernier Health Center  
91200 Overseas Highway, #17  
Tavernier, Florida 33070  
(305) 743-0383

Marathon Health Center  
2855 Overseas Hwy, MM 48.5  
Marathon, Florida 33050  
(305) 743-4000