

October 4, 2019

MCHD observes Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) Recognition Day

MOBILE, Alabama — The Mobile County Health Department, along with health departments across the country, took part today in the eighth annual National Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) Recognition Day. Celebrated each year on the first Friday of October, National DIS Recognition Day honors the DIS workforce that is the backbone of all STD and HIV health department programs.

DIS are public health warriors and play an imperative role in intervening to halt the transmission of STD, HIV and other communicable diseases in the communities they serve. They track disease spread, reach varied populations, and link patients to STD testing, treatment, PrEP and HIV care.

MCHD staff members receiving certificates of appreciation were Karen Bowling, Veronica Mercadel, Cherrite Peterson, Danielle Simpson and LaSonja Smith. The documents were signed by Dr. Bernard H. Eichold II, Health Officer for Mobile County.

“Disease intervention specialist are public health superheroes and have my highest respect and gratitude for the important work they do,” said Dr. Rendi Murphree, who oversees MCHD’s Bureau of Disease Surveillance and Environmental Services. Also present at the ceremony were Johndra Lewis of STD Surveillance & Control and Peggy Evans of Tuberculosis Surveillance & Control.

It is important to recognize those whose work often goes unrecognized. DIS brave unsafe conditions, work weekends and nights, and respond to crises outside of STD/HIV and Tuberculosis prevention including pertussis, H1N1 influenza, E. coli and other outbreaks.

DIS work in health departments, community health centers and other similar locations. Their role was initially established to work in the field of STD prevention. However, these public health professionals have ground-level investigative skills that have also become key components of tuberculosis outbreak response; HIV exposure notification; other infectious disease control efforts; and emergency response. DIS have expertise in essential skills such as communication, interviewing, counseling, case analysis, and provider and community engagement.

As the health care landscape evolves, DIS are needed even more as patient navigators and network builders to ensure patients are linked to care through expanded relationships with health care providers. DIS staff members are a critical part of the public health infrastructure and in building the link to health care.