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RENEWED SWINE FLU CONCERNS

With the start of a new school year coinciding with a resurgence of swine flu cases, state health and education officials have resume weekly conference calls to coordinate efforts to keep children and other Floridians safe from the widespread virus. Public health officials have declared children to be among the highest priority for vaccinations as soon as they become available, and have begun providing guidance to school officials to delay or stop the spread of the H1N1 swine flu virus. The Governor, state Surgeon General and Education Commissioner sent a joint letter to school district superintendents providing information about keeping Florida's school children healthy and safe, and said the key component of the state's prevention strategy is continuous education through public outreach.

PROBATION VIOLATION FOLLOWING CHILD PORN CONVICTION

A man who was previously convicted of possessing child pornography doesn't necessarily violate his probation just because he is later found in possession of adult-themed pornography, a state appeals court ruled. The state would have to show that the adult material is "relevant to the offender's deviant behavior pattern," which could require prosecutors to present evidence establishing a rational relationship between the sexual materials and the deviant behavior pattern, the court said. The Daytona Beach-based court said a trial judge will have to review the materials found in the home of a man who served a prison sentence for possession of child pornography. The state had argued that the adult materials were automatically sufficient to establish a violation of probation, but the appeals court disagreed. State law "does not prohibit a probationer from possessing any and all obscene, pornographic, or sexually stimulating materials, only those materials that are relevant to the charges for which he was placed on probation," the appeals court said, so "when the material is not clearly or closely related to the underlying offense, there must be evidence sufficiently linking the materials to the defendant's deviant behavior pattern." The appeals court ruling is available online at www.5dca.org/Opinions/Opin2009/081009/5D08-3688.op.pdf.





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ADVOCATE REMEMBERED

Child advocates throughout Florida mourned the loss Roberta Fox, a Coral Gables attorney who spent a decade in the Florida Legislature pushing women's and children's issues. During her six years in the House and four in the Senate, Fox sponsored legislation to help protect children. Among her successes were two pieces of 1985 legislation, one allowing children to testify in abuse cases via video rather than having to face their abusers in person and the other requiring fingerprinting and background checks for individuals who would work with children. Before her election to the Legislature she served on Governor Reubin Askew's Commission on Marriage and Family, and during her legislative career she also helped push for the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act of 1977. Fox, who earned a reputation as an active feminist in the Legislature, died of breast cancer.

HOMELESSNESS GRANTS

Children who are part of homeless families and those aging out of foster care are among those who will benefit from more than \$2 million in state-funded homeless Challenge Grant funds awarded to 23 local continuums of care serving 45 counties across Florida. The Department of Children and Families issues the annual awards to provide services to more than 27,000 homeless people in Florida, including individuals, families, youth aging out of foster care, persons with mental illness or substance abuse issues, victims of domestic violence, and veterans. The state has provided the homeless assistance Challenge Grants since 2001. More information on the grant program is available online at www.dcf.state.fl.us/homelessness/index.shtml.

GRANTS FOR CRIME VICTIMS

Attorney General Bill McCollum announced the award of more than \$19.3 million in grant funds to help crime victims throughout Florida, with a special emphasis on programs to assist children. The funds will be provided to more than 200 private and public agencies through the federal Victims of Crime Act, and will be used to provide direct services to victims. To highlight his priority on services for children, McCollum made the announcement at a Tallahassee program that provides direct services to children in schools. "Florida victims – especially child victims – and their families deserve our best efforts to protect them, to serve them, and to care for them," McCollum said. Among the grant recipients are the Child Victim Rapid Response Program at Turn About Inc., Compassionate





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Families Inc. of Jacksonville, and Kristi House of Miami, which serves as the Children's Advocacy Center in the 11th Judicial Circuit. A full list of grant recipients is available online at

[http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/KGRG-7VARXF/\\$file/FloridaVOCAGrants09-10.pdf](http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/KGRG-7VARXF/$file/FloridaVOCAGrants09-10.pdf).


NEW CHIEF BEVERAGE REGULATOR

Florida has a new official in charge of stopping underage drinking and smoking. Veteran law enforcement officer John Powell, a Pensacola native, was named the new director of the Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco, a unit of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation. Powell, who holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a master's in public administration, has served in various roles with the Escambia County Sheriff's Office, as an FBI special agent, and as a police chief at cities in South Carolina, North Carolina and Alabama. The department declares that one of the division's missions is to keep alcohol and tobacco out of the hands of underage persons.

PROVISIONAL VITAL STATISTICS

The state Department of Health has made its provision vital statistics reports for the first quarter of 2009 available online. The reports contain the latest information on births and deaths, including fetal, neonatal and infant deaths, as well as information on marriages and divorces. The provision reports include 10 separate tables with detailed statistical breakdowns – for example, not just live births but live births to married and unmarried mothers, by mother's race or age, or by county. The tables can be viewed at www.flpublichealth.com/VSBOOK/VSBOOK.aspx.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS RISE



The organization that administers the SAT said Florida's involvement with the college entrance exam reflected more students taking the test and higher performance than before. The state's combined SAT reading and math scores rose slightly in 2009, with a record 100,179 students taking the test. The results also indicate that Florida's Hispanic and black students are outperforming their national counterparts on the reading and math sections of the SAT. The report said 58 percent of Florida's high school graduates took the SAT, compared to just 46 percent nationally. In a related report, the College Board said that for the fourth year in a row Florida had the greatest one-year increase in the number of public school Advanced Placement (AP) exam-takers when compared to all other



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states. Florida's AP test result also showed better improvement than the nation as a whole.

KIDCARE PUSH

Shortly before the start of the school year, a group of state agency leaders, associations and community groups vowed to provide ongoing resources and support to help more Florida children get health insurance through Florida KidCare. Agencies including the Department of Health, Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, Department of Education, Agency for Health Care Administration, Department of Children & Families and Agency for Workforce Innovation are implementing a variety of activities designed to help families with uninsured children apply for KidCare coverage. According to a news release, in the two summer months prior to the start of the school year, some 50,000 previously uninsured children began receiving preventive care through Florida KidCare.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENTS



Governor Charlie Crist appointed 21 Floridians to the One Church, One Child of Florida Corporation, and organization that encourages adoption through church congregations throughout the state. Appointed were: Rushie Dixon of Jacksonville, senior pastor of Faust Temple Church of God in Christ; Beverly Lane of Tampa, senior minister at African Methodist Episcopal Church; Willie Mayberry of Gainesville, pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church; Marian Tucker of Fort Pierce, pastor of Voice Deliverance; Eustace Douglas of Royal Palm Beach, pastor of Joy of Living Church of God; Brian Brown of St. Petersburg, senior pastor of St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church; George Ellis of Opa-Locka, president of Miami's River of Life; Gregory Haile of Fort Lauderdale, an attorney with Berger Singerman P.A.; Lucdel Harrigan of Fort Lauderdale, minister of Grace Haitian Baptist Church; Carmalita Hawkins of Tallahassee, administrative law judge with the Agency for Workforce Innovation; Admiral Henderson of Tallahassee, an operations consultant with the Florida Department of Children & Families; Andrew Hindman of Tallahassee, director of Faith- and Community-Based Partnerships for the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice; Gordon Johnson of Ormond Beach, president of Neighbor to Family Inc.; Linda Johnson of South Bay, fourth vice president with the Florida State Conference of the NAACP; Abigail Johnston of Orlando, an attorney with The Marks Law Firm; Paul Kummer of Niceville, senior pastor of Grace Lutheran Church; Kenneth Scrubbs of Fruitland Park,



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minister of First Baptist Leesburg; Denise Sharpton of Miami, marketing director of Sharpton, Brunson & Company P.A.; Deanna Smith of Stuart, chaplain with Wings of Deliverance Outreach Center; Gary Williams of Jacksonville, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Mandarin; and Emmett Wiseman of Plant City, pastor of Bethel Church.

MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

The Florida Missing Children's Day Foundation has issued a public invitation for citizens to come to the annual ceremony at the state Capitol on Monday, September 14. Governor Crist and other dignitaries are expected to attend the ceremony, which begins at 10 a.m. The event will mark the tenth anniversary of Florida's first Missing Children's Day, and comes one year after the event had to be postponed by a month due to the threat of approaching Hurricane Ike.

CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT FUND PLAN

The state Agency for Workforce Innovation, whose responsibilities include Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program, has scheduled a public hearing on the 2010-2011 Child Care Development Fund State Plan. The hearing will be held beginning at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 22, in the Caldwell Building in Tallahassee. The plan that will be discussed is scheduled to be made available beginning September 11 on the Office of Early Learning's website at www.floridajobs.org.

AGENCY'S SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL

Putting their money where their mouth is, staff at the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice donated hundreds of dollars worth of school supplies to help children at a struggling Tallahassee middle school. The department's headquarters staff adopted R. Frank Nims Middle School in 2008 in response to the school's performance challenges, and this year the employees donated close to 1,000 individual items – including backpacks, notebooks, paper, pens and pencils, crayons and markers, hand sanitizer and tissue. The department said its donation drive is part of its commitment to supporting educational success as a strategy to reducing the number of children referred to the juvenile justice system. Department employees also serve as mentors to the students at the school throughout the school year.

SCHOOL FITNESS WINNERS





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As part of the state's ongoing efforts to combat youth obesity, Governor Charlie Crist recognized eight elementary schools and eight middle schools as the 2009 winners of the Governor's Fitness Challenge. The eight-week school-based program is designed to help boost children's participation in physical fitness activities. Encouraging children to participate in this year's challenge, the state unveiled a redesigned website for the challenge at www.GovernorsFitnessChallenge.com. Eight public or private schools will receive \$5,000 to purchase sports or fitness equipment, after being randomly selected from among those schools having at least half the students participate in the challenge and demonstrating improvement in students' fitness performance areas. Eight other schools were chosen randomly from among those with 50 percent participation, and they will receive \$2,500 for equipment purchases. The \$5,000 recipients were schools in Brevard, Gilchrist, Lake, Marion, Miami-Dade, Nassau, Palm Beach and Walton counties, while the \$2,500 recipients were schools in Hillsborough, Manatee, Miami-Dade, Polk, Sarasota and Volusia counties.

