

WHO ARE WE

In 1983 Florida Statute 408 created health councils to identify, address and resolve health care issues of local concern. As a private non-profit organization the Council is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by County Commissioners to represent health care consumers, providers and purchasers.

The Health Council of West Central Florida, Inc. (HCWCF) serves Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee and Polk Counties. Our strategic goals are: (1) influence the accessibility of health care and social support systems through *comprehensive health planning*; (2) provide *education* about essential community health challenges and solutions; and (3) participate as a collaborative partner to address current and emerging health issues to develop and sustain efficient and cost effective *service delivery* systems.

Key Contact Information

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LEAD EDUCATION & AWARENESS PROJECT (LEAP)

Background

The Health Council received a one year grant from the EPA to raise community awareness and reduce the incidence of childhood lead poisoning in Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties. The age of the housing stock, rates of elevated blood levels and immigrant populations present in these counties made them targets for lead poisoning prevention efforts. In addition the 2004 hurricanes may have caused lead hazards due to improper work practices during repairs.

The Lead Education and Awareness Project's (LEAP) activities were guided by a local Task Force. Members included:

- Cynthia Goldstein-Hart, Epidemiologist, Polk County Health Dept.
- Kelly Johnson, Planning Director, Heartland Rural Health Network
- Timothy Mitchell, Environment Supervisor, Polk County Health Dept.
- Marcia Posey, EdD., College of Nursing at Florida Southern College
- Donna Stayton, Health Educator, Highlands County Health Dept.
- Carolyn H. Wyatt, Extension Agent III, UF IFAS Hardee Co. Extension

LEAP Accomplishments

- Formed a local Task Force to provide guidance on community education and the development of a Strategic Plan
- Designed and distributed a Physician Tool Kit to 200 family practice physicians and pediatricians
- Conducted *four* Train the Trainer sessions on lead poisoning and prevention for 48 people who can serve a community trainers
- Provided *two* Lead Safe Work Practices Training sessions for 36 city/county code enforcement and health department staff, housing and weatherization providers and home renovators
- Provided CEU training to 28 Parish Nurses
- Developed a training video
- Placed educational ads on *nine* radio stations
- Developed and distributed a long term Strategic Plan
- Posted LEAP materials on www.healthcouncils.org

What Can I Do

The LEAP Strategic Plan has a list of problem areas and proposed action. Please review the Plan to learn how you can get involved. For information on LEAP, please contact Kathey LaRoche at (727) 217-7070 or at klaroche@healthcouncils.org.