

PEP Talk

September 2004

A publication of the
Pinellas County Health Department

September 21 is “Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day”

United States Health & Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson has designated September 21 as “Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day.”

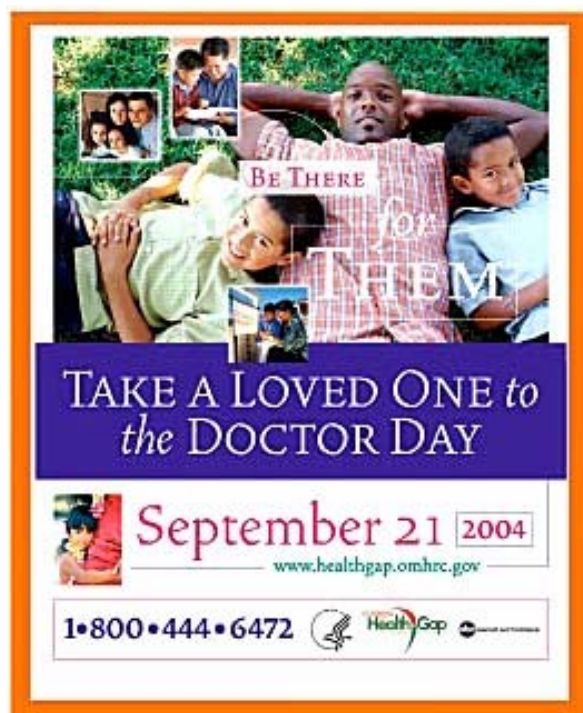
The campaign is designed to help reduce health disparities affecting racial and ethnic minorities by encouraging individuals to go to a doctor or health professional for a health screening.

Joining with Secretary Thompson to lead the effort for the third year is Chairperson Tom Joyner, a nationally syndicated radio personality and host of the *Tom Joyner Morning Show*. “Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day” will rally minority consumers to visit a doctor, nurse or other health professional – or to make an appointment to see a health professional.

Doctor Day is part of “Closing the Health Gap,” an ongoing campaign that combines the medical expertise of HHS with the broadcast resources of ABC Radio and the efforts of hundreds of national and community-based organizations.

“Because of Doctor Day, thousands of Americans are showing their family, friends and colleagues how much they care by taking someone to the doctor. This one preventive measure can help add years to your life,” Secretary Thompson said. “Preventable diseases take a terrible toll on our nation, especially in minority communities. Doctor Day is about bringing people to health care early, when diseases can be prevented or treated successfully.”

“Each of us must be willing to take the lead in the health matters that affect us and those we love. It can all begin with a visit to the doctor,” said Chairperson Tom Joyner. “We can each play a role in making our health a priority in our lives.”



As national chairperson I am honored to play a role in helping to spread the message of good health across the country.”

HHS has made eliminating health disparities affecting racial and ethnic minority populations a critical goal of Healthy People 2010 and one of Secretary Thompson’s priorities for HHS. The Pinellas County Health Department is also committed to reducing health disparities, and has numerous programs in place that target minority health.

For more information on Doctor Day, or “Closing the Health Gap,” you can visit www.healthgap.omhrc.gov or call 1-800-444-6472.

Our Vision

Healthier
People In A
Healthier
Environment

September is Baby Safety Month!

Baby safety is everyone's job

While baby and child safety should always be first and foremost with parents, caregivers and anyone who comes in contact with youngsters, one month out of the year is dedicated to promoting infant and child safety. In honor of this month, here are some reminders for baby safety:



- ◆ Children under five can easily choke on food items such as popcorn, hot dogs, raisins, nuts, grapes, raw carrots, ice cubes, chunky peanut butter and chunks of meat. Don't leave a toddler alone to eat.
- ◆ Check your child's stroller. If it's collapsible, make sure the latches are secure before putting baby in. Be sure to use the safety strap to make sure baby is secure in the stroller. Don't hang overloaded or heavy bags on the stroller's handle, as this may cause it to tip over.
- ◆ Never leave your baby unattended in the bathtub. And remember, a child can drown in less than a half-inch of water.
- ◆ Check the cords on your draperies and mini-blinds. Tie the cords up or cut them off. Keep them out of children's reach.
- ◆ Protect baby from the sun and heat. Babies overheat easily, and an infant who spends too much time in the sun or heat can become extremely ill. Guard your baby's skin from the harmful rays of the sun by applying sunscreen and making sure your baby is appropriately dressed for the outdoors.
- ◆ Take a good look at your baby's crib. Remove pillows, stuffed toys, quilts and other soft items. Make sure the crib is not located near windows, electrical outlets or lamps.
- ◆ Use this month to check smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and to update your first aid kit.

For more baby safety tips, contact the Pinellas County Health Department at (727) 824-6900 or visit: www.nhtsa.dot.gov (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration); www.redcross.org (American Red Cross); www.aap.org (American Association of Pediatrics); www.cpsc.gov (Consumer Product Safety Commission).

Make sure your child is buckled up correctly

"Buckling up" is the single most important thing we can do to protect ourselves and our children from serious injury and death in car accidents. But still each year, thousands of children in the U.S. are killed or injured in car accidents because they were not riding in child safety seats or because the seats were not installed properly. In fact, in Florida, more than 96 percent of child safety seats inspected by certified technicians are found to be improperly installed.



To help parents understand the proper use of car seats, the Pinellas County Health Department offers a Child Passenger Safety Program. This program, led by a nationally-certified instructor, includes training that details common misuse and proper installation techniques for safety seats. Low-cost safety seats are available to those who meet financial guidelines.

For more information, call (727) 824-6980.

Proper Child Safety Seat Use

	INFANTS	TODDLERS	CHILDREN
WEIGHT	Birth to 1 year, at least 20-22 lbs.	Over 1 year, 20-40 lbs.	Ages 4-8, unless 4'9", over 40 lbs.
TYPE OF SEAT	Infant only or rear-facing convertible	Convertible/forward-facing	Belt positioning booster seat
SEAT POSITION	Rear-facing only	Forward-facing	Forward-facing
ALWAYS MAKE SURE	Children to 1 year & at least 20 lbs in rear-facing seats only. Harness straps at or below shoulder level.	Harness straps should be at or above shoulders.	Belt positioning booster seats must be used with both lap and shoulder belt.

Buckle up everyone. Children age 12 and under ride in the back seat!



For more information regarding this newsletter, please contact:
Jeannine Mallory
Pinellas County Health Department
(727) 824-6908