



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 31, 2013

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STRENGTHENS EPIDEMIOLOGY PROGRAMS
~ Experts to improve disease investigation, surveillance and prevention ~

TALLAHASSEE – Today, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) announced staff promotions that will improve the investigation, surveillance and prevention of disease in Florida. Sharon Watkins, PhD, is the new Chief for the Bureau of Epidemiology and Dr. Carina Blackmore, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVPM, will now serve as the Chief Science advisor to the Division of Disease Control and Health Protection.

“I am pleased to announce these promotions within the Division of Disease Control and Health Protection,” said Deputy Secretary for Health and State Health Officer for Children’s Medical Services Dr. Denis Cookro. “Both Dr. Watkins and Dr. Blackmore have proven themselves invaluable to our Department’s mission of protecting, promoting and improving the health of all people in Florida.”

Dr. Sharon Watkins was previously the Senior Environmental Epidemiologist in the Bureau and also worked in the Division of Environmental Health’s Public Health Medicine program before the Department’s reorganization per HB 1263. The Bureau of Epidemiology oversees a variety of programs including surveillance, investigation, and prevention for numerous diseases. Dr. Watkins also serves as the occupational, injury and environmental lead on the executive board for the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE).

Dr. Carina Blackmore’s responsibilities will include coordinating the development, review, and approval of science-related policy, publications, plans, and other written products on behalf of the Division. She will continue to serve as the Interim State Epidemiologist, where she facilitates the collection and use of epidemiologic data across the agency and facilitates epidemiology-related partnerships building between DOH, other state agencies, Florida universities, and federal agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The Bureau of Epidemiology conducts science-based programs which protect the Florida’s health and reduce the burden from diseases and conditions of public health significance - whether infectious or of environmental origin. The epidemiologists and toxicologists within the bureau share a commitment to using the best scientific data available to shape prevention, intervention and disease control activities, and improve the health and safety of Floridians and visitors.

DOH protects, promotes and improves the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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