



## CHCHD News

*Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department*

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### **Becky Barnes receives R. H. Hutcheson, Sr., M.D. Award from the Tennessee Public Health Association**

Chattanooga, TN- Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department Administrator Becky Barnes was awarded the 2011 R.H. Hutcheson, Sr., M.D. Award at the annual Tennessee Public Health Association (TPHA) conference held in Franklin, TN.

The R.H. Hutcheson, Sr., M.D. Award is the highest honor bestowed by TPHA. It recognizes a career (minimum 20 years) commitment to and significant achievements in public health. The nominee must also have demonstrated active commitment to TPHA through service to the organization.

During her more than 30 years of service, Barnes has consistently pursued the Health Department's mission of "doing all we can to assure a healthy community."

Since joining the Health Department in 1980, Barnes has been instrumental in developing several programs, including Step ONE (Optimize with Nutrition and Exercise). She is a strong supporter of tobacco prevention initiatives and the Health Department's initiative to reduce infant mortality. Barnes was also at the helm as Hamilton County developed its emergency response plans and she continues to ensure Hamilton County is prepared in the event of a public health emergency.

"Becky is well respected among her peers. She is personable, approachable, and a team player. She is a champion and advocate for public health, whether it is in her official capacity or on the street as a good friend and neighbor," said Dr. Valerie Boaz, health officer at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department.

Workforce development is also a priority for Barnes and she has shown by example the importance of personal and professional growth. She created a "Healthy Health Department" committee which offers programs to employees to encourage healthy eating and exercise.

Barnes earned a BS in Nursing from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 1977. She joined the Health Department in 1980 as a public health nurse. In 1984 she was promoted to supervisor of home care and became chairman of the home health department in 1987. Barnes was named director of clinical services in 1988 and in 2000 she was appointed administrator.

Barnes has been an active member of TPHA for 26 years, serving in a variety of capacities. She has chaired TPHA committees, participated on boards, served as president from 1995-1996, and received the Tennessee Public Health Association Distinguished Service Award in 1998.

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