Anniston Community Health Survey (ACHS)

Most adults (79%) that participated in the survey have been told by a doctor that they have multiple health problems. High blood pressure (42%) and allergies (39%) were the most frequently self-reported health problems.

Anniston residents participating in the survey have higher prevalence of diabetes (17%) compared with other Alabama residents (10%) and with others in the United States (7.5%).

Anniston residents participating in the survey have higher prevalence of heart disease (15.5%) compared with other Alabama residents (5.7%) and with others in the United States (4.5%).

Anniston residents participating in the survey have a higher prevalence of obesity (36%) when compared with other Alabama residents (30.5%) or with others in the U.S (25%).

Most Anniston residents *feel* that PCB contamination in Anniston is severe.

Many people said they have been exposed to PCB contamination and have suffered negative health effects from this exposure.

Few people rated Anniston environmental health quality as very good or excellent.

Diabetes Study

Blood levels of PCBs, sugar, and lipids were tested for over 765 ACHS participants. Using the fasting blood sugar test, we discovered twenty-nine cases of diabetes that had not been previously diagnosed. We also found that 171 participants were pre-diabetic by the same test.

In the 35- to 54-year-old age group in this study, those with higher PCB levels were two to four times more likely to have diabetes than those with lower PCB levels, even after accounting for other known risk factors.

Given the serious consequences of diabetes, and the presence of high levels of PCBs, the residents of Anniston should take advantage of all methods to reduce their risk of diabetes and should aggressively seek out testing and treatment, if diagnosed, for diabetes.

Resources

The West Anniston Foundation has an extensive listing of educational and social resources and services available at low or no cost. Contact information: 1700 W. 10th St., Anniston, AL 36201. Phone: 256-238-9900. Other community resources are:

Health Care Resources

Quality of Life Healthcare
1316 Noble St., Anniston, AL 36201
256-236-0221

Services offered include healthcare (dental, pharmacy, vision, pediatrics) for those with no health insurance and low income. The co-pay for most visits is $20-25.

St. Michael's Clinic
1005 W. 18th St., Anniston, AL 36201
256-236-6060

Patients are seen on Monday and Thursday from 8:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m.
Free clinic, but patients need some proof of income

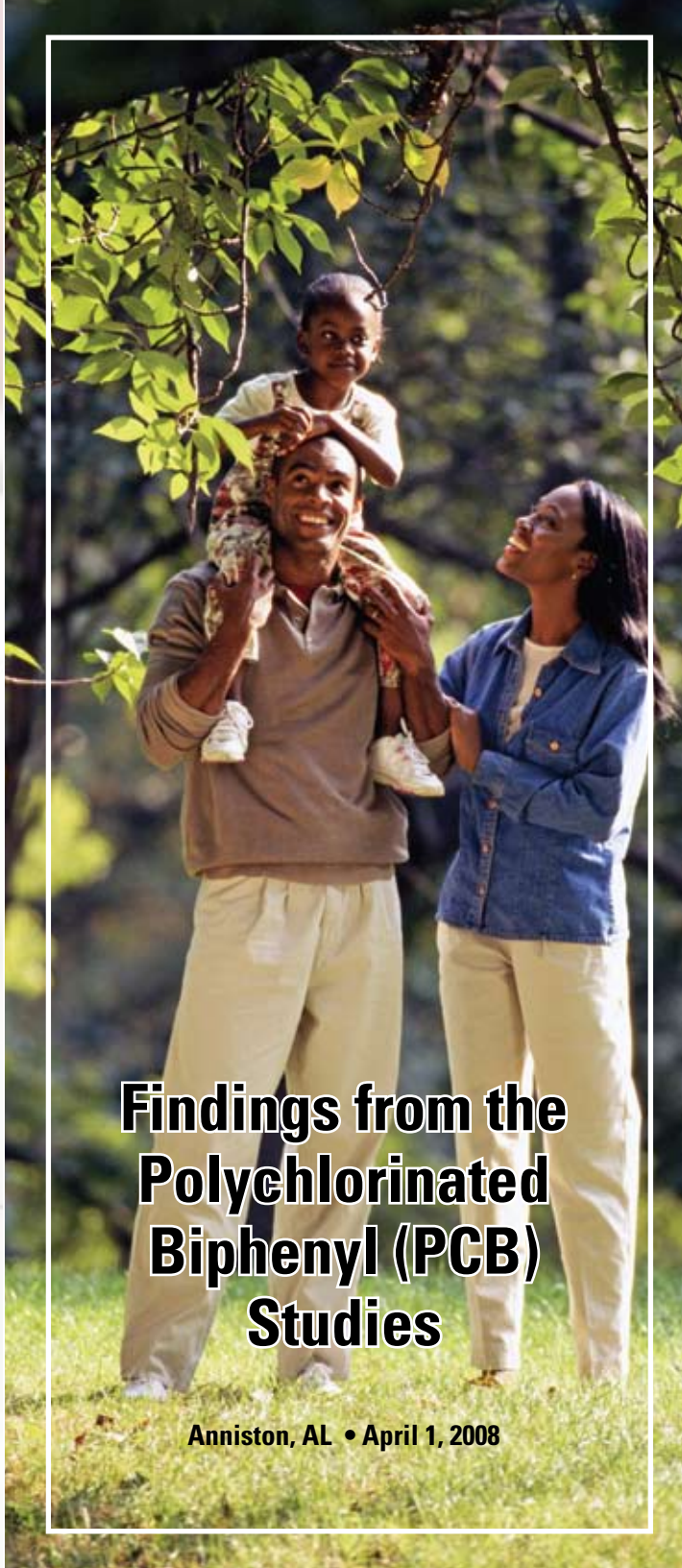
Drug Assistance program – no-cost or low-cost medications

Social Services Resources:

Family Services Center of Calhoun County
15 E. 11th St., Anniston, AL 36201
256-231-2240

Can assist or refer to appropriate resources for your needs

For additional information on resources in the area, you may contact Christie Shelton at 256-782-8427 or via email at cshelton@jsu.edu. Community Health Advisor Training (Natural Helpers) is led by Dr. Anne Turner-Henson, UAB. For more information, contact Dr. Turner-Henson at 205-934-7533.



Findings from the Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) Studies

Anniston, AL • April 1, 2008

Findings from the Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) Studies

As a result of efforts by the Anniston Community Against Pollution (CAP) group and U.S. Senators Richard Shelby and Barbara Mikulski, Jacksonville State University (JSU) was awarded a $3.2 million grant from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to study the health effects of PCB exposure on Anniston residents. JSU functioned as the community liaison for these research projects. Studies were conducted under the direction of the Anniston Environmental Health Research Consortium, a group of experts located at over a dozen universities and research centers in the U.S., with local input from a community advisory committee. On April 1, 2008, findings from these five studies were released at the community meeting:

PCB Exposure Assessment

PCB levels in Anniston children are much lower than in adult residents.

PCB levels in 321 children participating in the Anniston Neurocognitive Study are similar to PCB levels in children throughout the United States.

Current environmental and dietary exposures in Anniston do not appear to result in elevated PCB levels in Anniston children.

Adults' average PCB levels from the Anniston Community Health Survey (ACHS) are about four times greater than average levels in adults throughout the United States.

As expected, average PCB levels increase markedly with the age of the participants.

Across all age groups, average PCB levels in adult African-American participants in the ACHS are about three times greater than the levels found in White participants.

Anniston Neurocognitive Study (ANS)

A relationship may exist between higher PCB levels and less effective non-verbal planning and problem solving in children.

In children, a relationship between IQ and PCB levels is not noted.

There is a potential relationship between lower IQ scores in children and higher PCB levels in their parents.

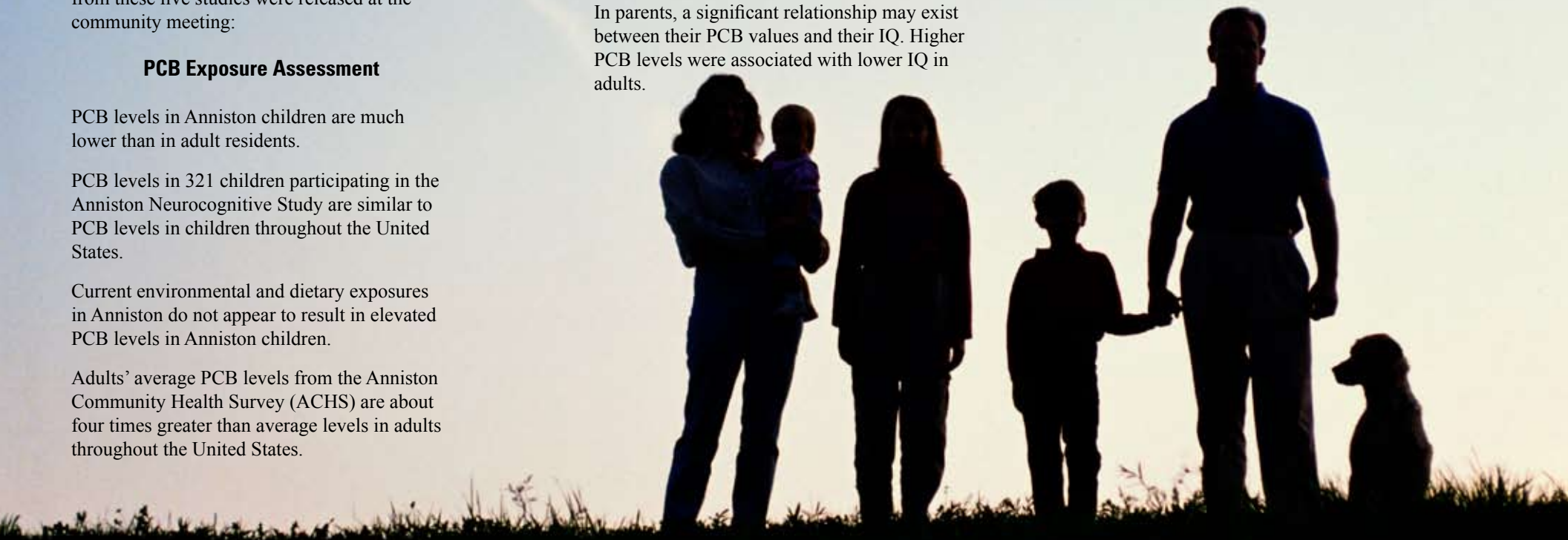
In parents, a significant relationship may exist between their PCB values and their IQ. Higher PCB levels were associated with lower IQ in adults.

Focus Group Study

100 members of the West Anniston community participated in 9 focus (discussion) groups whose purpose was to identify feelings and perceptions regarding PCB exposures, the general health of the community, and environmental conditions in Anniston.

Several common themes were identified including: a sense of loss of confidence in the government; a focus on death and dying; a sense of loss and connection to community; and feelings of betrayal, anger and confusion.

Focus groups helped us to understand the community's concerns and helped us work with community leaders and residents to encourage participation in the research studies.



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