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PRESS RELEASE 8-12-2012
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CARL L. BRUMBACK, MD, MPH
COUNTY'S FIRST PUBLIC HEALTH DOCTOR
1914-2012

Carl L. Brumback, MD, MPH, Palm Beach County's first Public Health Doctor passed away this morning at age 97. Dr. Brumback's lifetime was dedicated to bettering the health of all people in Palm Beach County and was the first to serve as Health Department Director beginning in 1950.

Dr. Brumback had very modest beginnings as he began serving the community from his Rambler Nash Station Wagon that carried him from the ocean communities to the muck farms in its farthest reaches. It was his foresight and dedication to keeping people healthy that molded Public Health into what it is today.

Dr. Brumback is credited with numerous firsts as he brought in nurses, nutritionists, and social workers, to help champion good health for all in the community and especially the 55,000 migrant workers that picked vegetables, fruits and cut sugar cane every year. In 1956 he also began the first Public Health Residency Program within a health department. At the time, Dr. Brumback said, "I felt the best way to attract quality public health physicians was through an accredited residency program that was unique in the country." The residency program remains today and has trained hundreds of physicians in public health and preventive medicine.

Current Palm Beach County Health Director, Alina Alonso, MD, said, "I am honored to have learned from truly one of the best. Dr Brumback was not only my teacher in the Residency Program he has been my mentor throughout my career in Public Health....He is the champion for healthy people."

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In his lifetime Dr. Brumback administered the polio vaccine that stopped the epidemic, led the way with tetanus shots to prevent lock jaw and brought under control the rampant tuberculosis that was prevalent in the Glades. But, he always felt curbing pollution was the best way to fight disease and created the Environmental Health program to protect the people from environmental hazards. It was this group that stopped raw sewage from being dumped into Lake Worth and through photographs, letters and personal visits convinced legislators to clean-up Lake Okeechobee. He has said, "The gas coming off the lake was so bad it would tarnish silverware." Environmental Public Health has grown to encompass drinking water programs, hazardous waste programs, animal and insect borne diseases, food hygiene, air pollution, solid waste, biomedical waste and more.

Today, Palm Beach County Health Department operates seven primary care health centers from Delray Beach to Jupiter and west to Belle Glade and Pahokee. The first of these began under Dr. Brumback who pioneered these centers as a means of preventive care that would lower the incidence of hospitalizations for the poor and needy. He also had a long struggle with state and federal officials to lift restrictions on Medicaid funding so more people could receive dental care, physicals, and prescriptions. He successfully accomplished this in 1981. The C.L. Brumback Health Center in Belle Glade bears his name in honor of his many accomplishments.

Although he turned over Direction of the Palm Beach County Health Department in 1986, after a 36 year career, he never stopped educating in the residency program and advocating for the health of the people.

Further information is on the Palm Beach County Historical Society site
<http://www.pbchistoryonline.org/page/clarence-l-carl-brumback-md-mph>