

NCPHA e-newsletter

E-Letter from the NC Public Health Association and the NCPHA Public Awareness Committee

FEBRUARY 2011

Salute! Union County's School Initiative

Union County Health Department's mission statement is to promote health, prevent disease and protect the health of the community. It was with this mission in mind that Health Department administration met with Bruce Piercey from GlaxoSmithKline in the spring of 2010 to discuss providing school employees with the CDC-recommended adult immunizations. The 2010 outbreak of pertussis in California of over 8,000 cases and 10 infant deaths also supported the school initiative. Another valuable partner, Blue Cross Blue Shield, assured vaccine reimbursement would be available.

In May 2010, Phillip Tarte, health director, met with all the school principals to discuss the initiative. The school system was very supportive and granted permission to provide vaccines to employees at school sites. Schools were grouped together and 10 elementary school sites were chosen. The first initiative was held in October 2010 and 1,291 flu and 561 Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis) vaccines were administered over a two-week period. The Union County School System employs 5,000 employees. The school initiative resulted in a 25% flu vaccination rate and a 10% Tdap vaccination rate. The success of the initiative was contributed to the convenience of the clinics for staff. Clinics were held from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. to allow staff time to receive the vaccines without missing work.

A second initiative was offered at 7 sites with 103 staff obtaining vaccines. More clinics will be held in March to provide the second series of Twinrix and other vaccines. Says Tarte, "It is our desire to continue this partnership with the schools and thus be able to continue to protect the health of our community."



From Jones Street...

A legislative update from Executive Director Lynette Tolson

Jones Street is bustling with activity now that the General Assembly is back in town. All eyes are on the new Republican majority in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The Governor released her budget last week – \$19.9 billion dollars. Items of concern in the Governor's budget include:

- Elimination of staff/positions
- Reduction of \$6.8 million in Aid to County – non-categorical funds that go to Local Health Depts. These funds pay for programs, staff and other items the health department would otherwise not have
- Elimination of local health department accreditation

The House is next in the budget process. On Wednesday, the Republican leadership released its targeted budget - \$18.3 billion dollars or \$1.6 billion less than the Governor. Guidance from the legislative leadership to the HHS Appropriation subcommittee included:

- Consolidate/Eliminate Smart Start and More At Four. (in consultation with the Education Subcommittee)
- Provider Assessments
- Managed Care

- Maximize federal funds (block grants)
- Evaluate federal maintenance of effort requirements
- Consolidation of divisions
- Medicaid parity with State Health Plan/Health Choice.
- Copayments
- Consider closing facilities
- Eliminate structural redundancy (restructure the organization to streamline services)

Things are scheduled to move very quickly this session. Below is the timeline that has been released by the leadership.

- April 22 – House passes its budget
- May 14 – Senate passes its budget
- June 1 – Conference Report is approved by both chambers and sent to the Governor

NCPHA will be following the budget process and policy discussions that impact public health. Advocacy alerts will be e-mailed throughout the session asking for your participation in the legislative process. Now is the time for us to work together to educate our policy makers on the important work that you do and how it impacts our communities. I hope you will be an active participant in the process.

By George!

By NCPHA President George O'Daniel

I am pleased to announce a new effort that should be of great benefit to our Association membership. The North Carolina Public Health Practice-Based Research Network (NC PBRN), currently housed at the NC Institute for Public Health, is designed to stimulate and support new research based on the work of local public health agencies. This network allows health departments and their research partners to study the implementation and impact of practice innovations and best practices to improve public health systems and services. The leadership of NCPHA and the NC Institute for Public Health have been exploring ways to better connect this to NCPHA through creation of an academic liaison workgroup within NCPHA to work with the NC PBRN to research questions of interest to public health practitioners.

The network is administered through the NC Institute for Public Health and includes collaboration with the NC Division of Public Health, the NC Association of Local Health Directors, and research partners at the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. It is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Current research activities under the network include a study of the effects of recent policy changes to the Maternity Care Coordination and Child Service Coordination programs. Previous studies included a community-based rapid needs assessment of seasonal and novel influenza vaccine readiness.

In support of this initiative, in my capacity as President, I am creating an ad hoc committee, which will be called "Academic Practice-Based Research Network Workgroup." This workgroup, which will be chaired by Dorothy Cilenti, will consist of academic researchers and practitioners interested in advancing the practice of public health through better translation of research findings to practice. There will be a conference call in March to jumpstart the workgroup and establish a timeline of events. The goal will be for this workgroup to become a formal section at the September full association conference. If you are interested in becoming a member of the workgroup, please contact Jennifer Park, NCPHA Public Health Administrator, (919) 828-6205, jpark@ncapha.org.



Where Are They Now?



Most everyone knows where Dennis Harrington is these days, orchestrating hundreds of things as Deputy Division Director and Chief of Administrative, Local & Community Support at the NC Division of Public Health.

Dennis has been in public health now for 32 years having served at the local level 19 years in local health departments and now 13 years with DPH.

But, did you know that Harrington won the NCPHA's prestigious Rankin Award in 1996 as health director of Davie County, having served there starting in 1989. Harrington began his career in public health as a WIC Nutritionist in the Scotland County Health Department in 1979. He was in one of the first cohorts awarded a BSPH degree in Nutrition. Prior to that time, nutrition degrees had only been received at the Master's level. This entry level degree served him well by allowing him to positively impact many women, infants and children in this segment of his career. While working full-time as a nutritionist, he earned a Master of Health Policy and Administration degree from UNC in 1984. The opportunity he was given by Lucile Bridgeman, long time health director in Scotland County, to work in overall administration encouraged this career change.

Lynda McMillan, administrative assistant to the current health director in Scotland County, who started at the Scotland County HD on the same day as Dennis, remarked "He was extremely active in our health department and community and will be remembered keenly in the community for his support of the fight to keep a hazardous waste facility out of our county while he was our health director!"

Says Harrington, "Public health is not just a job, it is a mission of service. People who spend their careers in public health service embrace the importance and impact that quality public health services make for the citizens served. I cannot think of anything else that I would want to do beside public health. We have tremendously dedicated employees at all level of public health delivery in North Carolina, and I am proud that I have had the opportunity to serve with so many of them across the state."

Contact Us

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Environmental Health Section: "Hittin' the ground running"*

By: Anthony Williams-EH Section president

The Environmental Health Section of NCPHA represents over 1100 environmental health specialists working throughout the state to improve public health through regulating food/lodging establishments, child care centers, and public swimming pools to name a few. We are also involved in permitting on-site sewage systems for proper waste disposal and protecting/ensuring safe private drinking water supplies. Our efforts are to prevent factors that will cause the spread of disease within the public realm.

The EH Section continues to recognize our colleagues with honors such as the Stacy Covil Environmental Health Specialist of the Year and the William "Bill" Broadway awards. We also provide scholarship opportunities for environmental health students

in the accredited environmental health programs at Western Carolina and East Carolina Universities. (Below is the list of award and scholarship winners from the 2010 annual fall educational conference). The EH section believes it is important to acknowledge those who are making an impact in environmental health and continue to offer assistance to those who are seeking a career in this occupation. In 2011, we will be turning our focus on other ways we can make a difference within our profession.

This past year the EH Section partnered with NCPHA to organize a 5K run/walk at the annual education conference in Wilmington. The first year for the event was a fundraising success! This was just the beginning as the event is already being planned for the September conference with an expecta-

tion for more participants and publicity. The EH section used this event as a promotion of environmental health through the use of the goody bags provided to the participants of the event. We welcome and encourage other sections to provide materials for the goody bags this year or even set up tables at the event as a promotion of how your section is working to protect public health.

Congratulations to:

- Kelly A. Nicewonger from WCU received the Stacy Covil Scholarship.
- Jessica Stevenson from WCU received the EH Section Scholarship.
- Linda C. Sewall received the J.M. Jarrett Award.
- Paula Weston-Cox received the Stacy Covil EHS of the Year and the Bill Broadway Awards.

Public Health Leadership Section*

By: Joanne Rinker MS, RD, CDE, LDN--Co-Chair

The Public Health Leadership Section represents over 200 public health professionals who either want to learn about how to be a leader or who are themselves leaders in the field of public health.

Section Activities

The NCPHA Leadership Section website has been "Under Construction" for way too long! This year, we would like to spotlight different public health leaders around the state to tell us why they are a public health leader. What inspired you to pursue a job in public health and how has it changed your life? This quarter, we spotlight our Annual Luncheon Speaker, Holt Anderson. I encourage you to read his story. If you are interested in being spotlighted in future quarters, please send your story to Joanne Rinker at joanne.rinker@dhhs.nc.gov. We look forward to learning

more about the leaders who are part of the NCPHA Leadership section!

In addition, we are currently working with the Advocacy Committee to determine the main legislative issues to either seek or support. Below were our 5 top priorities. The \$1.00 increase in tobacco tax was a priority for so many sections that this was the top priority for NCPHA.

- \$1.00 increase in tobacco tax (seek),
- Require medical facilities to report communicable diseases and conditions that are reportable (seek),
- Banning the sale of used mattresses or requiring modified sanitizing techniques (seek),
- Authority to adopt the Food Code (support), and
- Health Promotion/Healthy Carolinians funding (seek).



HEALTHY NORTH CAROLINA 2020:
A Better State of Health

Healthy NC 2020 Objectives

Did you know....

Tobacco use is a costly problem in the state leading to medical expenditures of \$2.4 billion (in 2004), including \$769 million to Medicaid. In 2006, secondhand smoke exposure alone led to excess medical costs of approximately \$293.3 million (in 2009 dollars). (North Carolina Institute of Medicine. *Healthy North Carolina 2020: A Better State of Health*. 2011)

That's why reducing the percentage of adults who smoke, high schoolers who use tobacco products, and exposure to second-hand smoke are three goals of Healthy NC 2020.

*Two NCPHA section articles not included in the quarterly newsletter have been inserted in this e-Letter.