

NCPHA e-newsletter

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

JANUARY 2012

Salute! Dare County

Dare County Department of Public Health responds to Hurricane Irene

Hurricane Irene brought high-powered winds and destructive floodwaters to the coastal counties of North Carolina. Upon reaching Dare County, Irene caused several breaches of Highway 12, leaving approximately 2,500 residents stranded on Hatteras Island and many area residents with damaged homes and businesses.

Over the next three months, the Dare County Department of Public Health (DCDPH) actively participated in community response and recovery efforts. Employees traveled by helicopter and emergency ferries to provide tetanus vaccines, special medical needs services, and environmental health assessments.

DCDPH also activated a local public health command center while staffing the Dare County Emergency Operations Center. Overall, this incident demonstrated that DCDPH's dedication to preparedness activities is invaluable to disaster recovery in Dare County.



From Jones Street...

A legislative update from Executive Director Lynette Tolson

It is an election year for all 170 seats in the NC General Assembly. Get to know the candidates and ask them where they stand on public health issues in your community and state. It is necessary that we educate these candidates about the importance of the public's health and the impact of policy and fiscal decisions on our health. Now is the time to educate!

The current General Assembly will return to Raleigh on February 16th for another 2-day mini-session. At this time, our state budget is being discussed and addressed in meetings. Medicaid is expected to be on course to have over a \$240 million shortfall. Programs will be on the chopping block. Please be aware of the budget process and educate your legislators on public health programs. We certainly want to stress how prevention saves the state dollars. We know a healthy population makes a healthy community. Please share examples of how important your public health programs are to our state and communities. April 23rd is the last mini-session scheduled before the short session convenes May 16th.

NCPHA will be hosting an educational and advocacy day on May 22nd at the Sheraton, Raleigh. One confirmed speaker is Secretary Lanier Cansler (resigned his position effective January 31st). Legislative leaders have been invited to address us during the lunchtime session. The afternoon will include educational sessions as well as opportunities to walk to the NC Legislative Building to meet with your Representatives. We hope you will make plans to attend.

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SAVE THE DATE!

NCPHA Spring Conference:

Preserving the Public's Health: A Day to Focus on Education and Advocacy

May 22, 2012

Sheraton Raleigh Hotel

Future Focus: 2020 Spotlight on Infant Mortality



North Carolina's infant mortality rate declined sharply in 2010, reaching its lowest level in state history. The rate, seven infant deaths for every 1,000 live births, represents an 11.4 percent drop from the state's 2009 rate of 7.9 deaths. The largest decline in infant mortality in 2010 was among African American infants, a reduction of 19.6 percent from the previous year. To learn more, visit <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/deaths/ims/2010/>.

These improvements address two of the three objectives in the Infant Mortality Focus Area of HNC2020. North Carolina continues to seek effective ways to reduce infant deaths and eliminate disparities in birth outcomes, as we work toward our goal to be one of the healthiest states in the nation. Check back here each month for more information about our state's health objectives, or find out more at <http://publichealth.nc.gov/hnc2020>.

Happy New Year!

A message from President Gayle Harris

To no one's surprise, the year started with lots of activity within the organization. All committees are busily working on activities to strengthen both NCPHA and public health in North Carolina.

Mark your calendars – May 22nd is the date of our Spring Conference! This year's conference will be held in Raleigh. The theme is "Preserving the Public's Health: A Day to Focus on Education and Advocacy." Led by Vice President Joanne Rinker, the Public Awareness Committee is developing an awesome agenda that is packed with information that will enhance our skills and empower us to act!

It is my pleasure to share with you a preview of some of the activities of the day. Former Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and current Chair of Health Care Reform Commission, Lanier Cansler, will update us on his new role and his vision for the new health care system in our state, including how public health will fit. Norma Mills Houston from the UNC School of Government will follow with an "Advocacy Training," where we will learn what government employees can and cannot do in advocacy. Next, Peg O'Connell, Chair of our Advocacy Committee, will present NCPHA's Policy Priorities. A panel of legislators will then speak to us about where public health and prevention will fit in the new health care system and how they prefer to receive communications. As time permits, opportunities for Q&A will be provided following each of the morning presentations. At the conclusion of the morning session, attendees will be armed with information about the current state of affairs, an understanding of advocacy rules, and NCPHA's legislative priorities.

After lunch, there will be *time to act!* Attendees who signed up to visit their legislators will head to Jones Street to meet with members of their local delegation to discuss NCPHA policy priorities and local concerns. Remaining attendees will have the opportunity to attend concurrent sessions featuring topics previously requested by the membership. Stay tuned for more details.

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