

Communiqué

Public Health is Your Health Too !!!

Winter 2001 - 2002

2001 - 2002

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Letter from the President....



2001 was a truly eventful year for public health in Nebraska. Many of us were very busy working on LB 692, the bill that directed the Tobacco Settlement Funds into health related programs. The \$6 million slated for public health is the largest fund that has ever been available to us. As of the end of the year, 83 counties have applied for the \$5,000 planning funds to develop regional health departments, and now we have 41 counties covered by public health departments. The building of public health infrastructure has begun! *Please remember to thank your senator for this great opportunity.*

We are very pleased to be the recipient of the APHA Affiliate of the Year Award for making an impact in a state with a small population and few health departments. Dr. David Corbin accepted the award at the 129th APHA Annual Meeting in Atlanta last October.

This past year, PHAN reorganized to make a better association for you and hope that you will take advantage of the services and programs that are being offered. With a grant from the Health Care Cash Fund, we will provide visibility for public health through the Social Marketing grant. Public health information will be available on various topics that can be shared with groups, decision-makers, and used for educational purposes. In addition, a Coordinator's Guide to Public Health in Nebraska will enable you to do projects that enhance the health of your community.

A second HCCF grant, the Public Health Workforce Training Program, will provide four workshops each year for the next three years for public health professionals. With the addition of several new health departments, we felt that it was important that both new and existing health department staff have the opportunity to learn the latest about public health issues. The first workshop is scheduled for April. Information will be mailed at a later date.

The Public Health Nursing Section of PHAN received a third HCCF grant: *Its My Bag - Public Health Nurses Across Nebraska*. This grant is for two years and will provide public health nurses with three training opportunities via satellite. Nursing CEUs will be available.

PHAN recently held a board retreat to update the Strategic Plan. The 2002 plan will focus on three goals: 1 - To advance public health policy; 2 - To stimulate public support for public health, and 3 - To strengthen and support the association. The board is working actively to meet all three of these goals and participation by members is vital.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the Public Health Nursing Spring Conference which will be held in Lincoln on April 11. April is also Public Health Month so be sure to plan a public health event. The PHAN Annual Conference is tentatively scheduled for September 13th in Grand Island. This event gets larger every year and in 2002 we are privileged to have Faye Wong, the APHA President as our keynote speaker.

In closing, I would like to encourage you to become more active in your association. We welcome your suggestions to help our organization make a positive impact on the health of all people in Nebraska.

Sincerely,
Pat Lopez, PHAN President

The Implementation of LB 692: A Progress Report

Dave Palm, Administrator, Office of Public Health-HHSS

Implementation of LB692

Major progress has been made in the implementation of the public health portion of LB 692. After the legislation was passed, the Office of Public Health (OPH) formed a Public Health Infrastructure Steering Committee with representatives from the Public Health Association of Nebraska, the Nebraska Minority Public Health Association, the Nebraska Partnership of Local Health Directors, the Nebraska Association of Community Action Programs, the Nebraska Rural Health Association, the Nebraska Association of County Officials, the Board of Health, the Nebraska Medical Association, the Nebraska Hospital Association, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the Turning Point Public Health Stakeholder Group, the State Legislature, and the Omaha Tribe.

The Steering Committee recommended that county clerks and county commissioner chairs be informed of the opportunities available in LB 692. Next, seven workshops were conducted across the state to inform and educate county commissioners, public health officials, health care providers, and other interested individuals. Information was presented about the requirements and funding opportunities, the steps required to become a local health department (see inset), and the benefits of a local public health department. Presentations were also made to county commissioners at the five district meetings sponsored by the Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO), and at the state NACO meeting in Omaha.

Finally, there have been numerous formal and informal meetings held throughout the state to determine the interest and feasibility of creating a new district health department. The meetings have been organized by representatives from local organizations.

Progress to Date

As of mid-December, 2001, 83 counties have received a \$5,000 planning grant. In addition, five areas have completed all or nearly all of the steps to becoming a district health department.

- East Central District Health Department (Boone, Colfax, and Platte Counties)
- Public Health Solutions (Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Saline, and Thayer Counties)
- Adams, Nuckolls, and Webster Counties
- Hall, Hamilton, and Merrick Counties
- Cherry, Brown, Keya Paha, Rock, Holt, Antelope, Boyd, Knox, and Pierce Counties

By the end of June 2002, it is anticipated that 13 to 15 new local health departments will be operational.

Next Steps

As new district health departments are created, technical assistance and training will be provided to new directors, staff, and board of health members. In order to provide this assistance, the OPH will be hiring two additional staff to assist with training.

Through a grant from the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund Program, twelve public health workforce training programs will be conducted by PHAN over the next three years. The Public Health Nursing Section of PHAN also received a Cash Fund grant to provide training via distance learning to public health nurses.

For more information, please contact Dave Palm at (402)471-0146 or by e-mail at david.palm@hhss.state.ne.us

Process for Establishing a Local Health Department

From a legal perspective, the process for developing a new district health department is not complicated and includes the following steps:

1. Develop a draft Resolution of Agreement which establishes the district health department and sets out the terms and duration of the interlocal agreement.
2. Hold a public hearing in each county to hear public comments about the formation of the district health department.
3. Adopt the Resolution of Agreement. This agreement must be adopted by the county board of each county participating in the district health department.
4. Submit the Resolution of Agreement and Notice of Public Hearing to the Nebraska HHS System for approval. It should be sent to: Richard Nelson, Director - Department of Regulation and Licensure - P.O. Box 95007 - Lincoln, NE 68509
5. Appoint a District Board of Health that has fair and equitable representation from the entire area to be served. The District Board of Health must consist of the following members: a) one member of each county board in the district; b) at least one physician; c) at least one dentist; and, d) one or more public-spirited men or women interested in the health of the community from each county in the district.

Update from Nebraska's New District Health Departments

Last summer, Nebraska senators passed LB692 which allowed \$6 million to be put into building public health infrastructure. After months of hard work several new regional health departments have been formed or are in the process of forming. More are expected later this year. (See article on *The Implementation of LB 692: A Progress Report* in this newsletter).

Public Health Solutions

This regional health department consists of Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Saline and Thayer Counties. For at least the next three years the health department will be based in Crete, Nebraska.

Public Health Solutions became an official district health department in December of 2001. All the resolutions, interlocal agreements and bylaws have been signed and an attorney has been retained. The Board of Health has 12 members which will meet once each a month. After the initial startup of the health department, quarterly meetings will be considered.

The roles and duties of the health director have been completed and the Board is in the process of writing the job description. April of 2002 is the target date to have a health director hired.

Advice / lessons learned: Try to keep it simple. Get the support of other health care providers in your community. In order for the health department to be successful it needs to be run as a separate organization.

Contact information: Joleen TenHulzen Huenke
402-826-3737
serpa@navix.net

Hall, Hamilton and Merrick Counties

The official name is undetermined at this time. Resolutions and hearings have been held and approval has been received from the state. Now waiting for counties to make selection of people to serve on planning committee. Tentative date for first meeting is February 1. The health Director has been selected.

Advice / lessons learned - Patience...take time to build relationships and be aware of the need to educate folks about what public health is all about.

Contact Information: Sonja Simpson, Health Director
308-385-5175
ssimpson@hamilton.net

Adams, Nuckolls, and Webster Counties

The official name is undetermined at this time. A location for the district health department has not been determined yet. All three of the county commissioner/supervisor groups held a public hearing and all signed their interlocal agreements. Originals were sent to the State for approval. We were officially approved as a district health department in November. Our charter Board of Health meeting was December 17.

Draft by-laws are being worked on and will be discussed at the next meeting on January 23. The Board of Health has been selected and is active. They will put in their by-laws to meet every other month, but until we get established and functional, they decided that temporarily they will meet monthly. The director has not been hired yet. Discussion regarding the director will be on the January 23 agenda.

Advice / lessons learned: It seemed like an uphill battle until one day, after the interlocal agreements were signed, suddenly it was downhill and things started moving very quickly. Now there's a lot to do.

Contact information: Joyce Crawford
402-460-5731

North Central District Health Department (NCDHD)

This name is unofficial but will be voted on at the first meeting. Resolutions have been signed and returned from all 9 counties (Antelope, Boyd, Brown, Cherry, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Pierce and Rock). In December we received approval from HHSS Regulation and Licensure.

The DHD will be located in O'Neill. Board of Health members have been selected. Monthly meetings are to be scheduled. The position of Director will be voted on at the first meeting - date will be set soon. The board members will make the decision on the hiring process. Tentative hire date is set for February or March.

Advice / Lessons learned - You will need to initiate frequent and effective communications to County Board Members on the importance of a District Health Department regarding health promotion and education, and communicate with other organizations that have already gone through the process.

Contact Information Roger Wiese
402-394-5614
wiesencpp@inebraska.com

East-Central District Health Department

Boone, Colfax, and Platte Counties. We have completed all the steps and are a District Health Department. We have a Board of Health which is nominated by members and then approved by Counties. They meet quarterly. A Director has been hired. We are willing to help others.

Contact information Rebecca J. Rayman, Health Director
402-563-9224
bjrayman@hotmail.com

Seward, Polk, Butler and York Counties

A name has not been selected but will be discussed at our next meeting. We, the local health department directors of the above counties, plus Roger Reamer from Seward have been meeting regularly, acting as a steering committee. A resolution has been presented to the Commissioners of each county. This month we hope to have all of these approved, signed, and ready to send in to the state, along with our publisher's affidavits of the notices of public hearings that were held in December. The Commissioners will appoint board members. We are still lacking a dentist who is willing to sit on the board. Once they are officially appointed, they will meet frequently until a Director is selected. Then the Board would only be required to meet on a quarterly basis. We are anticipating that the search for a director will begin in early spring. Advice / Lessons learned: Develop a timeline to follow. We have tried to stick very closely to this, and it does help with setting short term, and realistic goals.

Contact: information Sherri Rediger Val Tvrdy
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Nebraska, Indiana Affiliates honored at Annual Meeting

Two Affiliates were recognized at the 129th APHA Annual Meeting in Atlanta in October for their outstanding work.

The Public Health Association of Nebraska received Affiliate of the Year honors from the APHA Committee on Affiliates, and the Indiana Public Health Association was also recognized by the Association. PHAN was honored for its ability to make a positive impact in a state with a small population and few health departments.

Nebraska ranks 42nd of the states in people per square mile and has only 22 health departments for its 93 counties. However, in the past few years, PHAN has made several accomplishments. The Affiliate was instrumental in obtaining a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant to create "Turning Point: Nebraska's Plan to Strengthen and Transform Public Health."

The Affiliate began to implement the plan by collaborating with a state senator to draft and pass a bill that provided millions of dollars in public health grants to public health groups across the state. Two of PHAN's members were selected by the governor to serve on the committee that chooses the grant recipients.

When the multi-state tobacco settlement was announced in 1998, PHAN seized the opportunity to advocate for more public health funding and founded Nebraskans for Public Health, enabling the group to hire a lobbyist.

Advocacy by PHAN and other public health groups paid off: In the last legislative session, more money was geared toward public health than at any other time in the state's history.

PHAN is now focusing its attention toward creating a public health marketing campaign and helping county coalitions form new health departments.



Mohammad Akhter, Executive Director of APHA shakes hands with David Corbin after he accepted Nebraska's award.

"As a result of PHAN's many efforts, the future of public health in Nebraska has never been brighter," said David Corbin, PhD, PHAN's Affiliate representative to the APHA Governing Council, in his nomination letter. "We have a plan, we have funding and we have the support to educate public health workers - all to advance the health of the public of the people of Nebraska."

The Indiana Affiliate was honored for its partnership in the state's Tobacco Free Youth Initiative, launched in 1997 to reduce tobacco use among children.

The project, led by the Marion County Health Department in Indianapolis, received the first-ever APHA/GlaxoSmithKline Partnership for Healthy Children Award at the Atlanta Meeting.

NACCHO's Searchable Online Database of Programs Addressing Health Disparities

NACCHO has launched a searchable online database containing state and local programs addressing health disparities. The database is searchable by health issue and state as identified in Health Departments Take Action: A Compendium of State and Local Models Addressing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health. Visit www.naccho.org; select "Health Disparities" from the Topics pull-down menu.

Report on Immunization Registry Development

The Oct. 5, 2001 issue of the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* discusses the development of community and state based immunization registries. The report summarizes the National Vaccine Advisory Committee's recommendations for registry development and highlights CDC's activities in response to these recommendations. To access a copy of the report, visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/RR/RR5017.pdf

Kids Benefit from Programs in Western Nebraska

Sherri Blome

Western Community Health Resources in collaboration with Northwest Community Action Head Start and the Nebraska State Patrol recently received a grant for a mobile fitting station. Our mobile fitting station offers free safety seat check ups in Dawes, Sheridan and Sioux counties. In addition, we provide free safety seat checks to all parents of newborns at Chadron Community Hospital and Health Services who request the service. Our fitting station is growing in popularity and is expected to increase in number of seats checked monthly. Business owners such as car dealers incorporate the fitting station into their daily business on the one day per month the fitting station is operational. During the month of October we checked 28 seats (28 in Chadron and 10 in Gordon) with 100 percent misuse observed. In November, 36 seats were checked (8 in Chadron, 24 in Rushville, and 4 in Hay Springs) with 89 percent misuse. In December, 21 seats were checked with 21 seats misused and 9 seats replaced. At the December 18 Gordon Native American Health Fair, 12 seats were checked with 12 seats misused and 12 seats replaced.



Thomas in a forward facing car seat

The promotion of Kid's Connection health coverage has fit nicely with our mobile fitting station. All participants at the fitting station are given identification labels for the back of their child safety seats which "sport" the Kids' Connection logo and contact information as well as spaces for pertinent information on the child should an adult driver be unconscious in a crash. We also have applications and other display information available. We feel that the two are a nice fit in promoting the overall health and safety of Nebraska's children.

Throughout the fall months we have also worked to promote Kids Connection health coverage through incentive items to schools. Mini-footballs and mini-volleyballs were distributed at athletic events in several Panhandle communities which contained Kids Connection information and the Kids Connection logo. Book covers were also distributed to local schools in Dawes and Sheridan counties as an effort to increase awareness. Phone calls regarding Kids Connection have increased with the addition of Kids Connection information to local community channels on television.

Resources

Child Pedestrian Safety Publication

National Strategies for Advancing Child Pedestrian Safety, available from CDC's Injury Center, offers ideas for encouraging children to explore their environments by walking while reducing their risk of pedestrian injury. This publication, produced in partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, discusses strategies to raise public awareness about child pedestrian safety, change attitudes and behaviors of both pedestrians and drivers, create safer environments for walking, develop and conduct safe-walking programs, and identify factors that put children at risk for injury while walking. To order free copies, call (770) 488-1506, or visit www.cdc.gov.

Community IT Toolkit

The Community Council of the Nebraska Technology Commission and the University of Nebraska's Technologies Across Nebraska Initiative collaborated on the development of the Community IT Toolkit. The toolkit contains a number of tools and resources to help communities incorporate information technology into their community and economic development processes. The assessment tool: *Is Your Community an Information Age Community?* can be used to begin community discussions regarding information technology. The toolkit is available at www.nitc.state.ne.us/toolkit. Contact Anne Byers at 402-471-3805 for more information.

Asthma And Schools Web Site

To meet the growing need for information and resources about asthma among school staff, the National Education Association's Health Information Network launched a new Web site. The site features: Asthma Essentials, which includes a series of short fact sheets outlining major aspects of asthma and how to handle it at school; a searchable database that lists resources from various asthma-oriented organizations that school staff can use in working with students and families who experience asthma; and a glossary that lists asthma-related terms. The site is available at www.asthmaandschools.org.

Updated Online MCH Knowledge Paths

The National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health recently updated its online knowledge paths on childhood nutrition and adolescent pregnancy prevention. These and other knowledge paths contain information on key MCH topics and highlight high-quality resources and tools. Links to Web sites, electronic publications, databases, and discussion groups, as well as citations for journal articles and other print resources, are provided. To access the knowledge paths, visit www.ncemch.org/RefDes/knowledge_path.html

PHAN Section News

Public Health Nursing Section

Julia Tracy and Julie Rother



Back to Sleep Campaign in Nebraska

Save this date : February 1, 2002 at the Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department in Lincoln NE, a CEU opportunity! We have tentatively planned an update on the *Back to Sleep* Campaign in Nebraska. More information will be coming your way soon.

Nursing Section Membership

Teresa Barry and Marlene Mahoney have done a marvelous job with the membership record keeping. Our Nursing Section Membership has grown by 60 percent over the last two years! According to the November 2001 data, there are currently 128 PHAN Nursing section members.

PHAN Nursing Section Spring Conference

The 5th annual PHAN Nursing Section Spring Conference is scheduled for April 11, 2002 in Lincoln NE. The theme for the Conference and guest speaker information are pending. Mark your calendars!

It's My Bag! Public Health Nursing Across Nebraska

The PHN Section Grant, *It's My Bag! Public Health Nursing Across Nebraska* was funded recently for a two year period by the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund. The goal of the grant is to strengthen public health nursing in Nebraska by improving public health nursing educational opportunities. *It's My Bag* proposes to do this by offering a three-session PHN educational workshop via satellite delivery to 40 public health nurses across Nebraska this winter. The telecasts will be offered January 25, February 22, and March 29 of 2002, and will utilize the Minnesota "Core Essentials of Public Health" teaching curriculum. Target sites for the satellite broadcast include Grand Island, North Platte, and Scottsbluff with the telecast originating from UNMC. A competency instrument will also be administered pre- and post-education to assist with project evaluation. In May of 2002, the project coordinator will travel to the target sites to present a half-day workshop, pulling all of the educational "pieces" together, and providing further instruction and education to the grant participants.

Year two of the grant will also focus on public health nurses working in rural Nebraska, and the educational offering will consist of a video telecast broadcast to three new identified sites in Nebraska. The video telecasts will build on Year one and offer public health nurses education and instruction which will be made available on videotape for orientation purposes. Grant partners include Nebraska Nurses Association, the Public Health Association of Nebraska, and the Nebraska Rural Health Association. Please direct any questions regarding the grant to Carol Isaac at CIsaac0216@aol.com.

Your Public Health Nursing Section Representatives

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Legislative News

Meg Weber



The Legislative Committee of the Public Health Nursing Section met for the first time on December 7, 2001. There was lively discussion regarding the outcomes of the special session, particularly the effects people are seeing with job losses at the Department of Health and Human Services. A pre-session contact letter to Senators has been planned with the focus being our excitement about the upcoming session and the opportunities for continued growth of public health infrastructure in Nebraska. We want our Senators to know that we are still "out here" and willing to provide assistance, information, and resources at any time.

Individual members of the Public Health Nursing Public Policy Committee have volunteered to be personal contacts for different Senators. Specifically, our Committee is looking forward to continued efforts regarding the Children's Immunization Registry. We will be a liaison with Senator Suttle on this issue. Staffing ratios in child-care facilities will also be a priority. And, of course, protecting the LB 692 monies allocated to public health will be our ultimate goal. Please contact Meg Weber at mweber@ci.lincoln.ne.us if you would like to be involved in this Committee.

Local Health Department Section

Kay Oestmann, Director, Nemaha County Health Department
Chair, Nebraska Partnership of Local Health Departments

This past summer and fall have been probably the most exciting and invigorating of my career. The opportunity to provide REAL Public Health statewide has been a vision of the Local Health Directors for many years. It was my privilege to be a part of the group who traversed the state promoting and informing county officials and interested citizens about the development and implementation of LB692. My message outlined what Local Health Departments can do for a community. It was my goal to present the importance of the integration of core functions as being a requisite of the bill.

It is very important that we guide the new Health Departments in assuming the role they will play statewide. We, as public health professionals must keep an eye on the status and not settle for anything but exemplary Departments providing core functions and essential services.

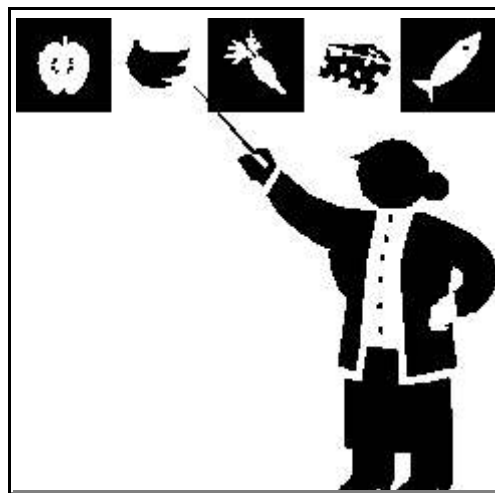
Nebraska has many skilled public health professionals who are capable of being the leaders of these new departments. As the search begins for Health Directors, there will be some excellent opportunities for growth. I challenge all of you to promote membership in PHAN for those new to public health. We are the voice they need to hear.

To the new departments, (and I do hope you are reading this) call on PHAN to be your resource for Public Health. Our diverse membership can assist you at the roadblocks you encounter. The most important thing for you to remember is to have a strategic plan including the core functions, and build from your assessment. Mapping will promote community involvement. Don't try to reinvent the wheel: coordinate with existing services, and find ways of addressing public health problems that are identified scientifically. Finally, become a member of PHAN. This organization and the Nebraska Minority Public Health Association were the driving force behind the creation of Nebraskans for Public Health which helped to draft LB692, leading to the successful passage of the bill. It is very important that all new departments encourage membership in the professional organization.

In closing, I'd also like to report that being the chairman of the Partnership of Local Health Departments has given me the opportunity to spend my summer and fall vacationing in Nebraska (Pat Lopez was amazed I could make most of the trips without a map). Representing the local Health Directors, I was also able to attend the National Public Health Association Convention in Atlanta. It was an awesome experience. To be able to attend sessions presented by persons who have authored articles and books on Public Health was a real pleasure. The experience of meeting public health friends and sharing experiences was one I truly enjoyed. The weather wasn't bad either!!!! I truly appreciate having had this opportunity.

For Public Health in Nebraska,

Kay Oestmann, Chair
Nebraska Partnership of Local Health Departments



Nebraska Prevention Provider Association (NPPA) Section

by Kay McMinn

State Incentive Cooperative Agreement

Nebraska was recently awarded a State Incentive Cooperative Agreement (SICA) from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention for \$9 million for three years. The mission of the SICA is to develop and implement a comprehensive statewide substance abuse strategy to identify, coordinate, leverage, and/or redirect prevention funding streams and resources to fill identified gaps in prevention services in order to reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug use by 12-17 year old youth. The project will be managed by The Division of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Addictions staff at Nebraska Health and Human Services, an Advisory Council appointed by the Governor and four work groups. Eighty five percent of the funds are to be allocated to the community level for increasing science based prevention. Contact information: Laurie Sutter, HHS at (402) 479-5573.

Prevention State Plans

The seven Regional Prevention Center Directors across the state have been working for almost two years to develop a statewide prevention plan. Two documents have been created. A work plan developed through the planning process will be a guiding structure/vision that delivers a common message within the integrated prevention system and contains a clear philosophy and theory behind it. The framework will contain vision definitions with key indicators, a clear philosophy guiding prevention and a strong internal prevention support system to be used as leverage points to move the plan forward.

Prevention professionals have partnered together to write and review a draft of the *Prevention Blueprint for Healthy Communities* strategic plan. The Blueprint contains, an overview of the prevention system, the prevention operating standards and prevention planning work. Regional Prevention Centers contact information:

Region I – Panhandle Substance Abuse Council – (308) 632-3044
Region II – North Platte – (308) 534-0440
Region III – Kearney – (308) 237-5113 ext. 224
Region IV – Norfolk – (402) 370-3113
Region V – Lincoln Council on Alcoholism and Drugs- (402) 475-2694
Rural Region V – Lincoln – (402) 474-0930
Region VI – Omaha – (402) 444-6573

Nebraska Asset Coalition

A statewide coalition is working to establish an asset building framework at this level in order to assist communities who are beginning their own asset building initiatives in Nebraska. We are a grassroots coalition that shares resources, coordinates efforts, and builds capacity. The coalition uses existing infrastructures to weave assets and resiliency concepts. Our next meeting will be held on January 8 from 1-3 p.m. at the Central Nebraska Council on Alcoholism at 219 West 2nd Street in Grand Island. Contact: Kay McMinn, Region III Behavioral Health Services at (308) 237-5113 ext. 224.

Building Developmental Assets in School Communities

The Nebraska Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Project and the Nebraska Asset Building Coalition have trained a group of 20 trainers statewide to help school staff integrate the asset framework into schools. Contact information: Karen Stevens, NE Department of Education at 402-471-2448.

Nebraska Prevention Providers Association

The Nebraska Prevention Providers Association mission is to promote education, advocacy, and public policy for setting standards that will validate the field of prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems. NPPA has established a Prevention Generalist Training, a Prevention Ethics class and a Prevention Credential System. NPPA meets twice a year and the next meeting is scheduled for March 14 from 1-3 p.m. at the Lincoln Council on Alcoholism and Drugs at 914 L Street in Lincoln. Contact information: Kay McMinn (308) 237-5113 ext. 224



Bioterrorism and Rational Thought

Dr. Richard Raymond
Chief medical Officer

Nebraska Health and Human Services System



Americans have been changed by the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11. Our country's peace of mind has been disturbed. Anxiety levels are high, according to a national survey recently published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The survey found that four out of every ten Americans have reported serious stress in the days following the attacks.

Anxiety levels continue to be high because of the discovery of anthrax in the mail and in postal facilities, with a few cases of personal infection. Because of that, some people have reported trepidation about every piece of mail they receive. Others become alarmed at any white powder anywhere, resulting in reports to authorities of cases that turn out to be coffee creamer or cornstarch powder.

We should keep bioterrorism in perspective. For the vast majority of the citizens of the U.S., the anthrax threat is very small. We are much more likely to die as the consequence of smoking, eating fatty foods, or not buckling our seat belts. Consider these facts:

- Tobacco is the leading cause of death in Nebraska. It causes about eight deaths in the state every day, more than accidents, HIV/AIDS, fires, murder and alcohol combined.
- Accidents are the fifth leading cause of death here, causing over 600 deaths last year. Some of these are preventable—falls, drowning, and car crashes. Focusing health education programs on these could make a difference.
- Heart disease killed over 4,000 Nebraskans last year, a number that could be changed by smoking cessation, a low-fat and high-fiber diet, and exercise.

- Each year 20,000 people in the U.S. die from the complications of influenza, but only two-thirds of Americans over age 65 (a high risk group) get flu shots that could prevent the disease.
- Over 7,000 people in the nation die each year from bacterial pneumonia, something that could be prevented by a one-time vaccination.
- Even a lightning strike is more likely to end an American life than anthrax.

In Nebraska, there have been no confirmed or suspected cases of bioterrorism due to anthrax infection or contamination, but there is evidence of bioterrorism. Bioterrorism is terror that is a result of a biological agent. In the case of anthrax, the "bio" part is small but the "terrorism" component is huge. Public health and the medical community will take care of the biological element; we must help contain the terror by keeping risk in perspective.

Anthrax was a disease unfamiliar to most people just a few short months ago. If we recognize that anthrax is not contagious by person-to-person transmission and is treatable with easily obtainable antibiotics, our anxiety level will be in line with reality.

The State of Nebraska and the federal government are doing everything possible to prepare for and respond to terrorist acts. Starting in September 1999, Nebraska began upgrading its Public Health Laboratory to a Level 3, allowing the state to handle suspected anthrax and most other agents of bioterrorism. Nebraska is one of 23 labs in the nation who have such capability.

We also began to increase our surveillance and epidemiological capabilities. We hired a bioterrorism surveillance coordinator to work with state and local agencies. We partnered with our two largest county health departments to add infectious disease epidemiologists to their staff who would be available to assist in an infectious disease investigation, if needed, in rural Nebraska. On September 11, 2001, we initiated the Health Alert Network which enables us to communicate with health care providers, local health departments, community action agencies and others as quickly as possible via fax or e-mail.

Keeping the facts in mind, rational thought and actions will win the day. We don't want to let unfounded fears get the best of us. That would mean that the terrorists are winning in a game that is more psychological than physical.

Bioterrorism Resources

The New England Journal of Medicine has published several articles on anthrax in the November 29, 2001 issue of the Journal and is providing access to other relevant articles. New information will continue to be posted at the Journal's website and from the online version of Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine. To view the new articles and get links to other information go to:
<http://nejm.org/specialnotice>

The Journal of the American Medical Association has published several articles on anthrax in the November 28 issue of JAMA and is providing free access to other articles on bioterrorism from JAMA and the Archives journals on their website. To read the new articles and get links to other information, go to:
<http://pubs.ama-assn.org/bioterr.html>

Nature magazine has published two articles on anthrax which can be seen on their website. They are providing free access to other articles on bioterrorism from previous issues of the journal. *Nature* will continue to inform and explain the science behind current events as it happens, and this page will be updated accordingly. To read the new articles and link to other information, go to:
<http://www.nature.com/nature/anthrax>

The World Health Organization (WHO) provides several resources at their site, including frequently asked questions about the use of biological agents and chemicals as weapons and fact sheets about anthrax and smallpox. For more information go to:
http://www.who.int/emc/deliberate_epi.html

The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC), in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), offers *Bioterrorism Readiness Plan: A Template for Healthcare Facilities*, a plan that serves as a reference document and initial template to facilitate preparation of bioterrorism

readiness plans for individual institutions. The plan outlines the steps necessary for responding to the biological agents most likely to be employed in any future biological attack: smallpox, botulism toxin, anthrax, and plague. To access the plan, go to:
<http://www.apic.org/educ/readinow.html>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) presents clinical laboratories with the CDC protocols for anthrax and the procedures to follow in the event they think they may have a case or isolate. Protocols and screening algorithms also are available for other agents at the American Society for Microbiology web site at:
<http://www.asmtusa.org/pasrc/cdc-notice-labs.htm>

CDC serves as the national center for developing and applying disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion and education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States. As such, it is the clearinghouse for up-to-date public health information, available by accessing their webpage at: <http://www.cdc.gov>

The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) is prepared and published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The data in the weekly MMWR are provisional, based on weekly reports to CDC by state health departments. The reporting week concludes at close of business on Friday; compiled data on a national basis are officially released to the public on the succeeding Friday. To get the latest MMWR, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr>

The Johns Hopkins University Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies' website is a great resource on the subject of anthrax specifically and bioterrorism generally. A joint production of the Schools of Medicine and of Public Health at Johns Hopkins, the page has many useful links, including one devoted to anthrax. Go to:
<http://www.hopkins-biodefense.org>

Tobacco Free Nebraska Promotional Efforts

Lt. Governor Dave Heineman unveiled advertisements last November to be used in a statewide promotion against tobacco use. As part the Tobacco Free Nebraska program, the \$700,000 media campaign will feature a variety of advertisements for newspapers, magazines, billboards, radio, television and movie theaters. "The purpose of the campaign is to prevent tobacco use and to create awareness about the hazards of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS)," Heineman stated. "This program will carry forth the message that tobacco use is dangerous and harmful to oneself and the people around you."

According to the Centers for Disease Control, tobacco is the most preventable cause of death in the United States. In Nebraska, approximately 8,000 children and teens start using tobacco each year, leading to addiction. The average age that kids start smoking is 11 and 80 percent of current smokers began smoking before the age of 18. Approximately 35,000 youth now under 18 will die from smoking if current trends continue. The historic settlement with the tobacco industry in 1997 now provides an estimated \$246 billion to states for an indefinite period of time. LB 1436 which was passed by the Nebraska Legislature and signed by Governor Mike Johanns in 2000, established Nebraska's Comprehensive Tobacco Plan, dedicating \$7 million per year for three years to tobacco prevention, reduction and cessation programs administered by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System (HHSS). An additional \$1 million in funding comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Ga. For more information, contact Judy Martin at 402-471-2101.



Current Funding Opportunities

Handspring Foundation Offers Funding for Programs Serving At-Risk Children and Youth

Deadline: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1, 2002

Eligibility: non-profit, tax-exempt organization per Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code

Purpose: The Handspring Foundation will make cash grants to non-profit organizations and overseas equivalents that focus on issues directly related to Children/Youth at Risk. Preference will be given to organizations with a strong underserved outreach component. We are particularly interested in organizations and programs that are directed towards the following:

- programs targeting high-risk youth that specifically utilize the arts, technology, and sports
- direct services related to children's health (e.g. immunization campaigns, food programs)
- direct services for children who are victims of abuse or neglect, including services to children in foster care
- homeless assistance programs for families with children (food, clothing, education, job training)

Contact: Handspring, Inc.

189 Bernardo Avenue
Mountain View, CA 94043

Attention: Handspring Foundation Manager

E-mail: foundation@handspring.com.

RFP Link: <http://www.handspring.com/company/foundation>

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Maternal and Child Health Research CFDA 93.110RS

Deadline: Applications due March 1, 2002 and August 1, 2002
Approximately \$2.2 million available in FY 2002 to support ten awards of \$220,000 each. Project period is one to four years.

Eligibility: Public and nonprofit institutions of higher learning and public or private nonprofit agencies engaged in research or in programs relating to maternal and child health and/or services for children with special health care needs are eligible to apply.

Purpose: Support applied research relating to maternal and child health services that shows promise for substantial contribution to the current knowledge pool, and when used in States and communities should result in health and health services improvements.

Contact: Kishena Wadhvani, PhD, 301-443-2927,
kwadhwan@hrsa.gov, <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/html/grantsguidance.html>

Telehealth Funding Guide

<http://telehealth.hrsa.gov/grants/funds.htm>

Community Toolbox for Children's Environmental Health
Two Programs Deadline for both: Friday, March 15, 2002

Program 1 - *Children's Environmental Health Program*

Eligibility and Purpose: Community Toolbox welcomes applications from non-profit, community-based groups working to build organizational capacity as part of their effort to prevent environmental threats to children's health in communities at highest risk.

Program 2 - *Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program*

Eligibility and Purpose: Community Toolbox welcomes applications from non-profit, community-based groups working to build organizational capacity as part of their effort to prevent childhood lead poisoning in residential housing in communities at highest risk. These groups should be able to prove an existing budgetary and staff commitment to childhood lead poisoning prevention.

Contact: Community Toolbox for Children's Environmental Health
6532 Phinney Avenue North
Seattle, Washington 98103
tel: 800/220-7630 or 206/706-6490
fax: 206/706-6485
toolbox@teleport.com
website: www.communitytoolbox.org

Common Counsel Foundation

Purpose: The Common Counsel Foundation is a consortium of family foundations that will consider all nonprofit community health proposals. The majority of funded organizations have budgets under \$300,000. The foundation web site lists proposal components and also accepts the National Network of Grantmakers Common Grant Application. Hospitals or any other tax-supported institutions or government initiatives are not funded.

Contact: Common Counsel Foundation
1221 Preservation Park Way
Suite 101
Oakland, CA 94612-1206
Phone: 510-834-2995
Email: ccounsel@igc.org
URL: <http://www.commoncounsel.org>

The William Bingham Foundation

Deadlines: May and November.

Eligibility and Purpose: will provide grants to community health providers of family, AIDS, youth, substance abuse, and mental services.

Contact: William Bingham Foundation
21010 Center Ridge
Suite 801
Rocky River, OH 44116

Miscellaneous Stuff

April is Public Health Month

Be watching for event ideas you can do for Public Health Month. A Coordinators Guide will soon be available on our website (www.PublicHealthNe.com) or call PHAN at 402-483-1039 for ideas.

Clip for PHAN

Over the past 12 months, PHAN has mailed out several press releases on public health issues to the daily and weekly newspapers in Nebraska. We are asking your assistance help us determine if these releases are being utilized. Rather than hiring a "clipping service" we would like to request that you send us any articles you see relating to public health, and especially any from PHAN. Not only will this save the Association money, it will give us guidance as to what types of articles the newspapers feel are important for their readers. Please send clippings with the name of the newspaper and date of publication to: PHAN, 1321 South 37th St., Lincoln, NE 68510. Your help will enable us to provide a better service for all Nebraskans.

CDC's National Vaccine Program Office's website provides pertinent information about childhood, adolescent, and adult immunizations. You will find publications and reports on vaccine preventable diseases, vaccine safety, vaccine coverage, immunization laws, and immunization registries. Check it out at: <http://www.cdc.gov/od/nvpo/>

We need your input

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Communiqué and the upcoming quarterly issues. As members of the public health community, your input is very important to the success of this newsletter and we would like to invite you to submit articles of interest and dates of public health events in your community. Also, if you would like to see articles on special topics, please do not hesitate to call. We want to serve you and look forward your suggestions for making this a tool that you can use to improve the health of your community and to network with your peers across the state. Please call Rita Parris at 402-483-1039 or PublicHealthNe@cs.com if you have ideas for this newsletter.

Order your PHAN T-Shirts Today

We have a limited number of PHAN T-Shirts available in medium, large and extra-large. They are white, short-sleeved t-shirts of good-quality material printed with PHAN's new logo on the front. Order yours today by sending \$15 to PHAN, 1321 South 37th Street, Lincoln, NE 68510.

National Kick Butts Day 2002

National Kick Butts Day 2002 will soon be here -- April 3, 2002. This is the Nation's largest initiative to protect children from tobacco addiction and exposure to secondhand smoke. For information on a free Planning Activity Guide, contact the National Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids @ (888)839-3869 or visit website www.kickbuttsday.org.

It's not too late...

Recently, all PHAN members received two fill-out forms in the mail. The yellow one asked for your input into helping us determine what public health topics are of interest to you. This information is being tallied to see what topics are important to you, so we can plan the Public Health Workforce training workshops that will be conducted four times per year as a result of a recent Health Care Cash Fund grant award. If you have not sent in your form, you still have time, even though the deadline is past.

The second form (blue) is to provide us with a data base of members and the State Senators that represent them. This information will be used if there is important public health information we need to relay to our senators. Please take the time to fill out both of these forms and send them to: PHAN 1321 South 37th Street, Lincoln, NE 68510. For more information, please call 402-4873-1039. YOUR Association is working for YOU!!!

Look



A pullout fact sheet you can copy and use for your programs or to hand out in educational situations. Watch for more fact sheets coming your way. Soon to be available on PHAN's website.

If you have ideas or information you would like to contribute to PHAN's Fact Sheets, please contact Rita Parris at 402-483-1039 or PublicHealthNe@cs.com

PHAN Fact Sheet

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Annual Nebraska Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day

Stephen G. Jackson

HHSS - HIV Prevention & Ryan White Program

On February 7, 2002, Omaha and Lincoln will recognize the first Annual Nebraska Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day. Education and prevention remain key elements in fighting and stemming the spread of HIV and AIDS, and these will be the main ideas behind the February event.

HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect African Americans both nationally and locally. In Nebraska, African Americans account for approximately 4 percent of the population while accounting for 18 percent of AIDS cases and 25 percent of HIV cases. (HIV has been reportable by name in the state of Nebraska since 1995; AIDS case reporting since 1983.) *

Events will be held in Omaha and Lincoln to bring awareness of how HIV and AIDS are affecting the Black communities in Nebraska. This event will also be recognized on a national scale. The inception of the event began with the Community Capacity Building Coalition (CCBC), a group of five national



organizations funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the National Minority AIDS Initiative.

The CCBC actively advocates for HIV/AIDS prevention, education and services for African American communities and seeks to involve and mobilize these communities in eradicating this pandemic. To that end, the CCBC is coordinating the second Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day on February 7, 2002, during Black History month.

While this is the second annual event for the national organizations, this will be Nebraska's first annual event. If you have a desire to participate or receive information as it becomes available, contact Steve Jackson at 402/471-2504 or via email steve.jackson@hhss.state.ne.us

*Data obtained from the NHHS Surveillance Program, 402/471-2937.

HRSA's Child Health USA 2001 Reports Teen Birth Rate at Record Low

The latest edition of HRSA's Child Health USA reports that the birth rate in 1999 among adolescents fell to a record low -- less than 50 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 19. Much of *Child Health USA 2001* -- the twelfth annual report on the health status and service needs of America's children -- focuses on children with special health care needs, defined as youngsters with chronic conditions requiring services beyond what most children need.

Access to physicians is a central issue for children with special health care needs. Children with disabilities, part of that group, make more physician visits each year than other children. Among children ages 5 to 14, 20 percent of those with disabilities made four or five doctor visits per year, compared to less than 5 percent of non-disabled children. Although children with disabilities make fewer visits to the doctor as they mature, the gap between them and non-disabled children persists.

Other findings of Child Health USA 2001 include:

- Teen birth rates are much higher within minority groups. Among Hispanics, the adolescent birth rate in 1999 was 93 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 19; among African Americans, 84 births per 1,000.
- The mortality rate among African American infants is more than twice that of whites, with 5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births for whites in 1999 and 14.6 for African Americans.
- In 2000, nearly 73 percent of children 18 to 35 months of age were fully immunized; close to a million children still needed one or more doses of vaccine.
- The percentage of children covered by private health insurance or by public programs increased. Between 1998 and 1999, the proportion of uninsured children declined from 15.4 percent to 13.9 percent. Among children in poverty, the proportion dropped from 26.4 percent to 24.2 percent.

With the most current data available for public health professionals and others in the public and private sectors, *Child Health USA*, published by HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau, is an easy-to-read snapshot of children's health and includes graphs and summaries of long-term trends. To order a hard copy of the 2001 edition, visit www.ask.hrsa.gov, and click on "Search Publications."



2002 Calendar

January 25

Its My Bag! Public Health Nurses Across Nebraska
Nebraska Satellite Learning Conference
Carol Isaac - 402-670-2460

February 1 (tentative date)

Back to Sleep Campaign
Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department
Lincoln, Nebraska
Julie Tracy - 402-441-8070

February 7

First Annual Nebraska Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day
Lincoln and Omaha
Steve Jackson - 402-471-2504

February 22

Its My Bag! Public Health Nurses Across Nebraska
Nebraska Satellite Learning Conference
Carol Isaac - 402-670-2460

March 29

Its My Bag! Public Health Nurses Across Nebraska
Nebraska Satellite Learning Conference
Carol Isaac - 402-670-2460

April is *Public Health Month*

April 11

5th annual PHAN Nursing Section Spring Conference
Lincoln, Nebraska
Julie Tracy - 402-441-8070

July 10-13

NACCHO Annual Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana
www.naccho.org

September 3-5

Nebraska Rural Health Association Annual Conference
Kearney, Nebraska
Rita Parris - 402-483-1039

September 13 (tentative date)

Public Health Association of Nebraska Annual Conference
Grand Island, Nebraska
Debbi Barnes-Josiah - 402-471-9048

November 9-13

APHA Annual Conference
Philadelphia, PA
www.apha.org

Public Health Association of Nebraska
1321 South 37th Street
Lincoln, NE 68510