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THE NORTH CAROLINA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
A Quarterly Newsletter • February 2007

February 2007

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Award-winner Karen Knight addresses the Southeast Public Health Leadership Institute in Chapel Hill as SEPHLI director Lisa Macon Harrison looks on.

Southeast Public Health Leadership Institute announces Year 9 awards

Celebrating ten years of leadership development among southeastern states, the Southeast Public Health Leadership Institute feted the best projects and scholars of its most recent graduating class, December, 2006. [More...](#)

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The Public Health Academy was established in 2006 upon receipt of a three-year Duke Endowment grant. The North Carolina Institute for Public Health (NCIPH) is partnering with Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) to broaden public health professional development opportunities and experiences through AHEC's multiple-site educational system. [More...](#)

The next Public Health Grand Rounds broadcast/ Webcast will be May 11 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. ET.

"Healthy People in Healthy Places" will focus on the CDC's Healthy Communities program that encourages communities to identify the root causes of health risks by assessing areas such as environmental threats, water and air quality, food safety, waste sites, and safe streets, using PACE-EH, Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health. Wabasso, Florida in Indian River County has used this assessment tool and will

From the Institute Director Ed Baker

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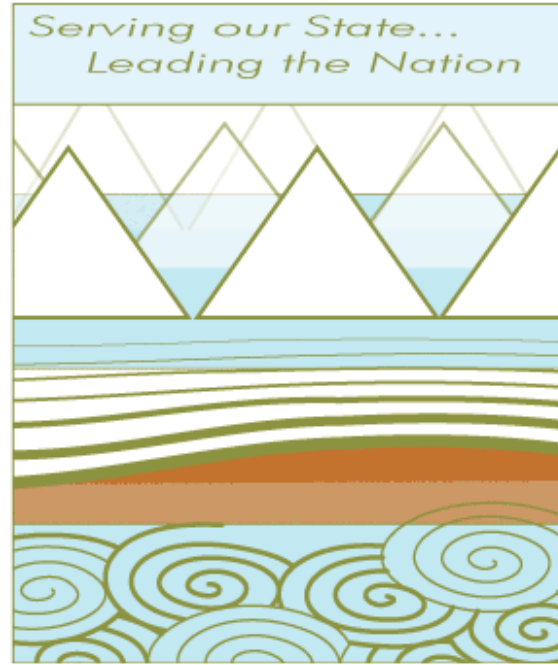
Institute assists with State self-assessment

North Carolina's Division of Public Health is conducting a groundbreaking pilot study on accreditation of a state health department. Led by State Health Director Dr. Leah Devlin, the division is undergoing an extensive internal review of the State's capacity to perform defined functions and services of public health. [More...](#)

Active Living by Design, a national program established by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and part of the North Carolina Institute for Public Health, was recently awarded a \$660,352 grant from the WK Kellogg Foundation to provide technical assistance to its new Food and Fitness initiative. The goal of this multi-year, national initiative is to create community environments that support healthy children, youth and families by making available and promoting the procurement and consumption of local healthy food and the creation of space and structures for physical activity and play. For more information about Active Living by Design please visit www.activelivingbydesign.org.

be featured.

THE NORTH CAROLINA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH



Santa's annual visit to distribute Institute presents to the kids of Horizons



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Multistate Learning Collaborative expected to identify tools for health department accreditation

Ten states have been selected to lead a national collaborative effort to explore quality improvement strategies in public health, the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) announced in December 2006.

Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, **North Carolina**, Ohio, and Washington were selected from a pool of 21 applicants to apply quality improvement strategies in the context of their existing performance assessment or accreditation programs. The 10 state projects are expected to produce models for action nationwide.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Senior Program Officer Pamela Russo said, "The project will incorporate quality improvement techniques into existing performance and capacity assessment efforts, with the ultimate goal of increasing the ability of public health agencies to protect and improve the health of the people in the communities they serve."

Acknowledging the momentum surrounding a national voluntary accreditation program for public health departments, NNPHI Chief Executive Officer Joseph Kimbrell stated, "This project will identify valuable tools that can be used by health departments as they prepare for accreditation."

The program, called the Multistate Learning Collaborative II, or MLC-2, is managed by NNPHI and the Public Health Leadership Society (PHLS). NNPHI and PHLS will provide technical assistance to the 10 states and opportunities to enhance the identification, exchange, and dissemination of lessons learned, best practices, and quality improvement tools. Each of the 10 participating states were awarded a grant of up to \$150,000 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

For more on the accreditation efforts in North Carolina and the administrative role of the Institute, go to www.sph.unc.edu/nciph/accred

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Don't hibernate, celebrate! How one Active Living by Design community partnership promotes physical activities during winter

An innovative partnership in the Upper Valley of Vermont/New Hampshire has changed snow and ice from an excuse to stay indoors into an opportunity for winter physical activity with the development of the longest ice skating trail in the country. The Upper Valley Active Living by Design Community Partnership maintains the two-mile track on Lake Morey in Fairlee, Vermont, and has staged two significant events to promote the trail as a viable winter equivalent to walking and hiking.

The Lake Morey Winter Fest 2006 drew 560 people from all over New England for a day of skating, skiing, sledding, snowshoeing, and other activities. Participants were given Winter Fest cards with spaces for stamps received at each activity. The event was a resounding success, with the number of participants increasing from 350 the previous year and people of all ages enjoying everything from long distance skating to snowshoe volleyball.

The partnership also held the second annual Lake Morey Skate-athon, its second event on the lake. About 250 people from as far away as Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York gathered to skate the four-mile roundtrip and raise money for the Upper Valley Trails Alliance, the lead partner, and other organizations. A local skate shop provided free trials on longer, curved-front skates designed for natural ice and a lakefront resort provided space for registration and refreshments. One intrepid skater accumulated 17 roundtrips, or more than 60 miles, on his official Skate-athon Stamp Card before the day was over.

These events, plus an up-to-date ice report on the Trails Alliance website and a dedicated person in charge of clearing the Lake Morey Skating Trail, have given the community an attractive destination for winter physical activity. Awareness of the trail has increased and the

partnership hopes for an even greater turnout next year. Trail use extends beyond the two events, with residents using the trail during the week and on weekends. All of these activities also are a part of the Trails Alliance's Passport to Winter Fun, a booklet that identifies events taking place in the region, as well as locations for independent activity. By stamping their passports as they complete activities, participants will create records of their winter activities to show others and to qualify for recognition at various levels at the end of the season. With winter posing a significant challenge to active living, the skating trail is a novel solution that provides enjoyable physical activity during the coldest months of the year.

Active Living by Design is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Upper Valley partnership is one of 25 selected for project support nationwide. See www.activelivingbydesign.org for details on other community initiatives.

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Southeast Public Health Leadership Institute announces Year 9 awards

Celebrating ten years of leadership development among southeastern states, the Southeast Public Health Leadership Institute feted the best projects and scholars of its most recent graduating class, December, 2006.

Best Leadership Project Award: Assessment in Public Health

“Dare County Substance Abuse Needs Assessment and Community Plan”
Anne Thomas, RN, MPA (North Carolina)

Best Leadership Project Award: Assurance in Public Health

“Burke County Indigent Primary Care Clinic”
David Rust, RS, MPH (North Carolina)

Best Leadership Project Award: Public Health Infrastructure (Finance)

“Pricing Model for Public Health Services”
Mark Barnes, MPH, MBA (South Carolina)

Scholars' Choice Leadership Project Award

“Tennessee 's Youth: BMI's and Beyond-A MCRO Approach”
Chris Freeman, MS (Tennessee)

Honorable Mention

“Community Planning for Pandemic Influenza”
Diana Riddle, MN, ANCC, RN (West Virginia)

“Tri-States Stroke Network GIS Application”
Khosrow Heidari, MA, MS, MS (South Carolina)

“Closing the Loop in Disease Surveillance Activities: Providing Feedback Where it Matters Most”
Jean-Marie Maillard, MSc, MD (North Carolina)

“Capacity Building for Technical Staff”
Pat Walker, MS (South Carolina)

“Miles of Smiles”
Janet McCumbee, RN (North Carolina)

“Expanding Preventive Healthcare for Children in Meigs County through Community Partnership”
Beth Blevins (Tennessee)

All award winning and honorably mentioned projects can be viewed on the SEPHLI website (www.sephli.org).

Awards Recognizing Best All-Around Scholar and Team Work

Each year, SEPHLI recognizes an outstanding scholar who distinguishes themselves from the rest of the class by showing achievement in

all aspects of the leadership development institute. This year, the Best All-Around SEPHLI Scholar Award was given to Karen Knight, MS, director of the Central Cancer Registry, part of the State Center for Health Statistics, Chronic Disease and Injury Section, NC Division of Public Health. Karen's final project was entitled, "Central Cancer Registry Workforce Development."

The SEPHLI Team-Work Award went to the Ohana Hakuna Matata. Team members are Penny Byrnside (WV), Angela Johnson-Grimmett (AR), Khosrow Heidari (SC), Jean-Marie Maillard (NC), David Rust (NC), and Jamie Swift (TN). Ohana Hakuna Matata set the bar for teamwork this year with outstanding team organization, mentorship, and commitment. This exemplary group of scholars proved the positive impact of an effective team.

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Response to law initiative accelerates program progress

A new Institute-backed preparedness project featuring collaboration between public and private partners is gathering steam. The Good Samaritan Liability Preparedness Initiative is aimed at extending liability coverage to business and non-profit entities that collaborate with the government to respond to public health emergency situations. Most state Good Samaritan laws leave significant gaps of liability for these groups, which can result in hesitation or lack of coordination during an emergency situation. The project is initially focused on two pilot states, North Carolina and Georgia, where the state health departments are heavily involved.

Strong support by public health leadership

This initiative, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, was discussed with public health leaders at the American Public Health Association's (APHA) 2006 annual conference in November. The leadership group strongly supported this partnership initiative, urging that it be expanded to all 50 states immediately. As a result, overview materials for a national audience were quickly developed for extending state Good Samaritan liability protection to cover business and nonprofits assisting in emergencies.

These new materials, now available on the project web site (www.sph.unc.edu/nciph/law), were subsequently distributed by APHA, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), and the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO). Currently, eight states have expressed an immediate interest in pursuing this important preparedness initiative.

Interest in the business community

Program Director Gene Matthews has also met with business leaders, particularly in North Carolina and Georgia, to acquaint them with the initiative and what it could mean for companies. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has sent out information to its membership.

What's ahead? In March, NCIPH will host a two-day workshop at UNC for national public health, business, and non-profit leaders to plan the next steps in this agenda.

The speed with which public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders, both nationally and on the state level, have embraced this cutting-edge legal preparedness initiative is extremely encouraging and suggests that a key Hurricane Katrina lesson has indeed been learned: public health emergencies require a coordinated response by all sectors.

For more information, see www.sph.unc.edu/nciph/law

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North Carolina Public Health Academy up and running

The Public Health Academy was established in 2006 upon receipt of a three-year Duke Endowment grant. The North Carolina Institute for Public Health (NCIPH) is partnering with Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) to broaden public health professional development opportunities and experiences through AHEC's multiple-site educational system. A new Academy field staff member, Margie Britnell, started working in June at Mountain AHEC focusing on the public health training needs of the Western counties. The next field staff member will be based at Charlotte AHEC.

The Academy is designed around schools for different public health professions such as local health directors, medical residents, public health nurses, environmental health specialists and public health social workers.

Each school is designed to match discipline specific public health competencies with the appropriate learning opportunities for professional growth. These opportunities may be programs, materials, websites, tools for design-making, etc. Emphasis is placed on linking practitioners to high quality training by helping them find what is available and easy to access.

One of the key benefits of the Academy is guidance counseling. Academy staff can help practitioners make the right professional development choices based in individual circumstances, resources and needs.

The heart of the Academy is ncpublichealthacademy.org. This site is the virtual campus with web space for the different schools. In each school practitioners can learn about professional competencies, identify learning opportunities and develop learning plans.

The Academy is not only for those currently in a position, but also for those aspiring for careers in public health as well as public health partners such as emergency responders or board of health members. The website includes information on public health careers and provides links to many training resources.

The first two schools—Local Health Directors and Public Health Nurses—are currently available and the School for Medical Residents is well underway. To learn more, visit ncpublichealthacademy.org or contact Janet Place, Academy Project Director, at jplace@email.unc.edu.

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Preparedness Center engages with local public health departments

Review of North Carolina local health department pandemic influenza plans

In partnership with the General Communicable Disease Control Branch of the North Carolina Division of Public Health (NCDPH), the Institute's NC Center for Public Health Preparedness (NCCPHP) is in the process of reviewing local plans for pandemic influenza. As of January 31, 2007, 39 (45%) NC health departments had submitted a partial or complete pandemic influenza plan to NCCPHP for review. Most of these health departments have received NCCPHP onsite oral and written feedback on the content of their plans. In all, 42 (49%) local health department pan flu technical assistance site visits have taken place. During the first quarter of 2007, all counties that submit pandemic influenza plans will have the opportunity to receive NCCPHP/NCDPH feedback on their plans. Local pandemic flu plans are due to NCDPH by March 31, 2007.

Using geographic information systems in local health departments

The NC Center for Public Health Preparedness is now working for the second year on a program with Public Health Regional Surveillance Team 5 (PHRST 5) that provides funding and training for local health departments to acquire handheld computer and geographic information systems (GIS) technology that will enhance their work. This program, titled Project 516, is funded through the North Carolina Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response. Recently, Project Manager Morgan Johnson has trained public health department staff on using GIS applications and provided technical assistance as health departments integrate GIS applications into their work. Similar training modules will soon be available via NCCPHP's website. NCCPHP has also directed and edited a promotional video describing the project and the benefits of GIS to public health to be produced by Mecklenburg County Public Health and will assist Carteret County with a county-wide survey in April 2007 to determine levels of hurricane preparedness in the community.

Using data from Project 516, NCCPHP Assistant Director Jen Horney and partners from PHRST 5, Mark Smith and Steven Ramsey, recently won the UNC Office of Research's monthly poster contest. Their poster was titled *The Rapid Response Project: Using Handheld Computers for Rapid Needs Assessment During Outbreaks and Disasters*. For more information about Project 516 or to learn more about GIS resources at NCCPHP, contact Morgan Johnson at morganj@email.unc.edu.

Team Epi-Aid participates in community health assessments

Team Epi-Aid is an award-winning volunteer student group at the UNC School of Public Health that is overseen by staff at the NC Center for Public Health Preparedness. Team Epi-Aid provides students with the opportunity to gain applied public health experience while providing North Carolina's local and state health departments with needed surge capacity. In recent months Team Epi-Aid has provided volunteers to assist local health departments with conducting community health assessments and other health surveys. At the Durham Gay Pride festival, volunteers worked in conjunction with the State Division of Public Health to conduct an HIV risk survey among men who have sex with men. Another Durham County activity involved assisting with recruitment for a study assessing lead in Durham's municipal water supply.

This quarter, ten Team Epi-Aid students assisted the Alamance County Community Health Assessment task force, a coalition of governmental and non-governmental organizations, to collect data as part of the county's community health assessment process. Team Epi-Aid volunteers interviewed community residents to gain a better understanding of the county's health issues. Team Epi-Aid also participated in a study led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the North Carolina Division of Public Health surveying Yancey County school parents after the county shut down schools following an influenza outbreak. Volunteers participated by calling parents of children in Yancey county schools and interviewing them to assess the impact of the school closure and parental attitudes towards the closure. For more information about Team Epi-Aid or to request assistance on a project email tea@unc.edu or visit www.sph.unc.edu/nccphp/teamepiaid.

Preparedness Center to release new epidemiology training

The Preparedness Center will soon be releasing its second epidemiology training CD-ROM and facilitator's guidebook. The *I is for Investigation* training series contains seven modules that use case studies to examine the concepts of an outbreak investigation. Modules teach how to recognize an outbreak, design a study and questionnaires, conduct interviews, analyze data, write an outbreak report, and communicate effectively with the public and media sources. The first training series, *E is for Epidemiology*, was released in 2005 and provides an introduction to the basics of epidemiology. The third and final training series, *P is for Practice*, coming later this year, will use case studies to practice/demonstrate knowledge of the principles taught in the first two series.

These training modules are designed to be used for computer-based self-study, as a face-to-face teaching tool for trainers, or for lunch-and-learn seminars or in-service trainings. Each module contains a PowerPoint™ presentation with detailed speaker's notes, guided discussion questions for individuals or groups, and additional resources. Each module should take 45 to 60 minutes to complete.

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From the Institute Director Ed Baker

Our school's mission is to improve public health, promote individual well-being, and eliminate disparities across North Carolina and the world. A central strategy in achieving that mission is translating research into effective practices and sound policies. The Institute plays a unique role in that process.

Our work in translating research into practice occurs in a range of programs and activities and stems from the Institute's partnerships with different members of the practice communities. On the one hand, the Institute seeks to support the adoption of evidence-based best practice where practitioners adopt interventions that have been evaluated and shown to be effective by public health scholars. One such project is the Teen Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Project, funded by the Health and Wellness Trust Fund. This project is being coordinated by the Institute in collaboration with the Northeast North Carolina Partnership for Public Health (NENCPPH). The NENCPPH is a voluntary association of nineteen northeastern North Carolina local health departments, one of six public health incubator collaboratives. Its project seeks to reduce tobacco use among teenagers throughout the region, and is based on the proven proposition that an intervention led by teens for teens can be an effective intervention. Health educators throughout the region have developed teen advocacy groups to work directly with their teen peers, to advocate with school administrators and policy makers, and to work with members of the community, like local restaurant owners. Their work is bearing fruit with three quarters of the region's school districts, over 100 restaurants, and selected organizations like the Beaufort County Hospital going smoke free.

Similarly, public health scholars have shown that faith-based organizations can be effective change agents in minority communities and can be key partners for initiatives that address health disparities. The Institute recently worked with another public health incubator partnership, the South Central Partnership, consisting of thirteen local health departments, to develop an evidence-based health disparities proposal. In the proposal, the health departments' key partners were churches throughout the region. The proposal was funded and is now an ongoing project. Known as the Sparrow Project also funded by the Health and Wellness Trust Fund, it addresses heart disease and stroke among the region's minorities.

On the other hand, the Institute seeks to promote dialogue between the practitioner and academic communities, where practitioners can inform scholars about priority research needs from a practice perspective. For example, the Institute, in collaboration with the School's Office of Research Support, recently convened a panel discussion of local health directors and faculty and staff from the School of Public Health and from other UNC Health Affairs departments. The objective of this discussion was to review what has worked and where things might be improved in community-based research and to identify ways that the dialogue between the academic and practice communities might be enhanced. Four North Carolina health directors and about 30 faculty and staff engaged in an energetic and expansive conversation, and a number of next steps have emerged. Examples of next steps include: 1) establishing regular forums for faculty and practitioners to meet and discuss research findings and needs (e.g. at the annual State Health Director's Conference, the annual NCPHA conference, and at selected meetings of the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors), 2) establishing a formal relationship between the SPH's Office of Research Support and NCIPH, where NCIPH forwards research needs identified in the field to Research Support, which distributes these needs to appropriate faculty, and 3) creating a web presence that lists practice-based research needs

along with practitioners who are interested in working with faculty on related projects.

The Institute is fortunate to collaborate with local, regional, and statewide public health practitioners on a range of initiatives. It strives to enrich these partnerships and its contribution to our practitioner partners. The Institute's translational role is central to these efforts. While we are proud of our current activities in bringing scholarship to the practice community, and in our efforts to stimulate scholarship through dialogue, we believe there is more to be done and plan to expand these efforts as we go forward.

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Institute assists with State self-assessment

North Carolina's Division of Public Health is conducting a groundbreaking pilot study on accreditation of a state health department. Led by State Health Director Dr. Leah Devlin, the division is undergoing an extensive internal review of the State's capacity to perform defined functions and services of public health. Since the functions related to public health are within two departments at the state level in North Carolina, the Division of Public Health in the Department of Health and Human Services and the Division of Environmental Health in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the two divisions are jointly participating in the pilot process.

“To date, no other state health department has been evaluated using the National Public Health Performance Standards (NPHPS) for accreditation purposes. It is anticipated that North Carolina's pilot will be used to inform the national initiative on whether this could be an appropriate tool, as well as how the process might work,” said Devlin. “It will involve a lot of people doing a lot of work but we are excited about possible outcomes to strengthen public health services in the state.”

Similar to the NC accreditation process for local health departments, the state will be measured using an instrument based on the Ten Essential Services of Public Health, plus its facilities and administrative practices and its governance by the State's Commission of Health Services. In contrast to local health departments, however, the state's assessment instrument is a modified version of the NPHPS. A committee composed of representatives from the three partners which work together on local accreditation (the Division of Public Health, the NC Association of Local Health Directors and the NC Institute for Public Health) revised the NPHPS document to fit North Carolina's structure and to look more like an accreditation tool.

A site visit by a team of national experts on public health performance improvement and accreditation will be a part of the process. That team will be led by Dr. Kaye Bender, who chaired the national “Exploring Accreditation” initiative. The role of the NC Institute for Public Health is to coordinate the site visit and to conduct an evaluation of all aspects of the process. The site visit will take place February 27 – March 1, 2007. The Institute has partnered with the State in accrediting local health departments; so far, 25 health departments have qualified for that designation in North Carolina.

Contact information: At the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Joy Reed, joy.reed@ncmail.net and at the Institute, Accreditation Administrator Craig Michalak, craig_michalak@unc.edu

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