

Changes and challenges in 2009

As we venture into the New Year, we have much to be thankful for and much to be proud of in 2008. We are perhaps most pleased to have delivered over 150 programs to nearly 7,000 public health practitioners around the state. We are thankful for our partners' continued support, in particular the Gillings School of Global Public Health, the N.C. State Division of Public Health, Area Health Education Centers, and the many public health practitioners who volunteer their time and talents to serve on continuing education committees and as instructors in our programs.

But we have reason to be concerned about access to training this year. The fall of 2008 was marked by a historic downturn in our economy that has caused great concern in the world, the state, and the field of public health. The Office of Continuing Education will face significant challenges in the coming months, as we continue to provide the training you need to improve your public health competencies and capabilities. We will be challenged to find innovative ways to increase your access to high quality, low cost programs, as you are challenged to do more and learn more with fewer resources.

We are also facing workforce challenges at UNC-CH. One of the most significant of these will be the retirement of two longtime members of the OCE staff, Richard Dideriksen, MEd, and Teme Levbarg, PhD. They both will be retiring on May 1, 2009. Together they represent over 52 years of experience in designing, developing, and delivering training programs across our state.

Teme has taught courses in supervision, communications, stress reduction, mindfulness, time management, customer service, team building and working effectively across disciplines, and orientation for local boards of health. She has consulted with professional associations, health departments, and health care and social service agencies to assist with organization restructuring, interagency cooperation, and strategic planning. She has also served on the NC Continuing Education and Training Advisory Committee for Public Health Social Work since its inception in 1993.

Richard Dideriksen has led the award-winning North Carolina Environmental Health State of Practice Committee since it was founded in 1981. He has been responsible for the design, development, and delivery of over 600 courses, providing more than 311,000 participant hours of professional continuing education across the state. He has led state, national, and international

environmental programs and has garnered several state and national awards for his exemplary work.

Both Teme and Richard have been active North Carolina Public Health Association members. They each received NCPHA's coveted Citation of Merit award, recognizing their individual contributions to North Carolina public health. Their strong commitment to public health practitioners and continuing education has been highly valuable and they will be greatly missed.

This will be a challenging transition for us, and we will do our utmost to maintain their level of professional service commitment to you. We wish them well in their future endeavors and know that you will too. We look forward to hearing from you, seeing you at this year's courses and conferences, and continuing to work together to improve the public's health in our great state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Hicks". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

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