

OCE Is Weathering the Economic Hurricane

The North Carolina Institute for Public Health (NCIPH) and Office of Continuing Education (OCE) have been serving local public health practitioners for decades with high quality, accessible programs to enhance professional performance. Over the last year, we, like you, have been challenged by the “hurricane” created by spellbinding recession and unusually restrictive State and University budgets. It is doubtful things will return to “the way they were” anytime soon. Much like a meteorological hurricane, the economic devastation has been severe. We will be rebuilding for some time.

As a result, OCE simply cannot do the amount of training it has done in the past and not nearly the amount we would like to do to serve local public health departments. As a result, you may see fewer programs from our office. Nevertheless, we assure you we will find new ways to provide quality learning and professional development opportunities.

As we weather the storm of these fiscal challenges, we proudly continue to focus on public health practitioners in local public health departments. Considering recent input from the NCIPH Continuing Education Advisory Committee, we will emphasize training for our key audiences who need continuing education hours each year to maintain their certifications and licenses: frontline public health practitioners, nurses, environmental health specialists, and supervisors.

As we look to the future, we will focus on the most needed programs, use flexible teaching strategies, and be cost conscious in program delivery to keep programs accessible to you. Currently we are planning to offer the most highly needed training programs in 2010, including online courses through our North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness.

Nursing Education

- We redesigned the *Management and Supervision* program for public health nurses to include managers from all public health disciplines. A recent Public Health Academy survey indicated that local public health departments greatly need training in supervision competencies. This spring *Management and Supervision* enjoyed a full class greatly benefiting from enhanced input and discussion amongst the various disciplines.
- The *Child Health Training Program* for Enhanced Role Nurse (ERN) certification lost its State subsidy, necessitating a fee increase. We recently modified it to include distance learning sessions to reduce participant travel costs, thus keeping the total cost at the same level as prior years. In the current session, participants are enjoying a very positive experience with the new format—they appreciated first meeting and interacting with each other during the webinar and then engaging face-to-face with already familiar students.

Environmental Health Education

- We will continue to partner with the State of Practice Committee (SOP) for practitioner courses. The Division of Environmental Health (DEH) will take on additional program administrative responsibilities for several programs. We will keep working with SOP and UNC's School of Government to deliver the popular *North Carolina Environmental Health Law and Ethics*.

Our resources, like yours, are limited. We have tried to keep program offerings and fees stable for the last decade—now, as our costs have increased, so must our program prices increase. In addition, we are using technology to improve our program administration and program delivery methods. We are piloting a new online registration system and supplementing our classroom courses with web-based technology to reduce your overall training costs, travel costs, and amount of time spent away from work. Managing these changes well, we can still give you the most value for your overall training dollar.

We express our sincere thanks for your loyalty, cooperation, and collaboration as we advance through the next year during these challenging times. We look forward to seeing you in one of our upcoming programs.

Steve Hicks

The Office of Continuing Education's 2010 web calendar is available at http://www.sph.unc.edu/nciph/catalog_of_courses_8289_8005.html.

The North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness' training web site is <http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/training/index.php>.