

## IN THIS ISSUE

- **Get Ready Campaign Goes to State Fair**
- **Search for Conference Speakers**
- **Together Rx Access**
- **Strategic Contribution Fund**
- **APHA Capacity Building Initiative**
- **Fargo and West Fargo Clear the Air**
- **Save the Date**

# ND PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 58, ISSUE 3

JULY 2008

The mission of the North Dakota Public Health Association is to positively influence the health of North Dakotans through a statewide association of health-related professionals.



## Message from the President

**Karen Volk, Wells County District Health**

Welcome to these lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer! In this beautiful ND season, public health activities abound! It surely is a busy time with all sorts of opportunities to showcase the smorgasbord of public health services and activities for our citizens across the state. I encourage all public health departments to be present at the local county fairs, community celebrations, and local events. One can provide education, highlight projects completed in the community and the impact on the community, conduct screenings, and inform citizens of the multitude of public health activities! Our health departments certainly don't take a vacation!

NDPHA was present this month at the North Dakota State Fair with a booth showcasing the "Get Ready" campaign. This display with handouts and information, is available for local health departments to utilize also. We want to inform ND citizens about Pandemic Flu prevention and preparation, all across the state. Lois Mackey has the display information and is the contact person for this project. Kudos to Sue Brandvold for chairing this new feature for NDPHA.

I want to put a plug in for locals to contact Program Managers at the ND Department of Health for pamphlets, giveaways, informational tools to utilize when conducting local public health activities. We can partner with our comrades in Bismarck and our citizens, across the state, are in a win-win situation.

Many thanks to Deb Swanson for emailing updates, APHA information, taking the lead on our APHA grant and keeping everything on track. What an organized, efficient gal! Thanks so much Deb, for sharing your gifts with NDPHA!

How fortunate we all are to have Lois Mackey as our Executive Director for NDPHA! She is the go-to person for us with such vast experience and knowledge! I want to recognize her and thank her from NDPHA's Governing Council.

All NDPHA members want to extend our caring and concern for Rolette County citizens and their recent tornadoes. Barb, please know that we are proud of the way you and your staff took care of business and provided public health services during this emergency situation. One never knows when a disaster can occur.

# Conference Task Force Looking for Speakers and Ideas

By Theresa Knox



Health Care in  
Crisis: Creative  
Solutions

2009 Dakota  
Conference on  
Rural and Public  
Health

Seven Seas  
Mandan, ND

April 1-3, 2009.

The Dakota Conference on Rural and Public Health will be held at the Seven Seas Hotel & Conference Center, in Mandan, ND, on April 1-3, 2009. The theme for the conference is:

## **"Health Care in Crisis: Creative Solutions"**

### Call for Speakers

With the theme selected, we are now on a timeline to select speakers. We need your ideas now! Please contact anyone on the NDPHA Conference Planning Task Force. Help us make this the best conference ever!

### Conference Task Force Members:

Theresa Knox, Chair  
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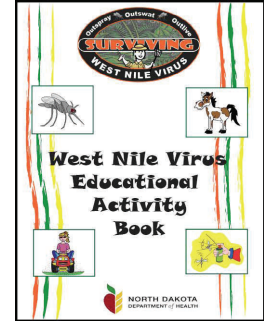
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**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

## **NEW WNV EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AVAILABLE FOR KIDS!**



West Nile virus educational materials are available to order **free-of-charge** from the North Dakota Department of Health. **New this year** is a 16-page activity book which was developed for kids and includes a word-search, crossword puzzle, mosquito check-list and many coloring pages. Ordering is free and easy, go to the health department WNV website at [www.ndhealth.gov/wnv](http://www.ndhealth.gov/wnv) and click on 'educational materials' located in the upper, right-hand corner. If you have additional questions about ordering, please call 701.328.2378.

## **Mark your calendar!**

**Injury Prevention and Control Conference  
"Preventing and Responding to Injuries"**

October 28-30, 2008

Best Western Seven Seas  
Mandan, North Dakota

[www.ndhealth.gov/injury/trainings](http://www.ndhealth.gov/injury/trainings)

Check out this website! [www.breathend.com](http://www.breathend.com)

## **SAVE THE DATE**

The North Dakota Public Health Association will sponsor "Public Health Day at the Legislature" on February 10, 2009 at the State Capitol in Bismarck. The event will feature public health displays and opportunities to visit with legislators during the 2009 legislative session. NDPHA will also highlight their "Get Ready for Flu" campaign to encourage the public and policy makers to prepare for pandemic flu. For more information, contact: Debbie Swanson at [dswanson@grandforksgov.com](mailto:dswanson@grandforksgov.com) 701-787-8113.

# THE GET READY CAMPAIGN



Nancy Bryn and Sue Brandvold with kids



Maureen Roden



## Get Ready Campaign Goes to the North Dakota State Fair

The North Dakota Public Health Association's goal was to help North Dakotans "Get Ready" for a potential influenza pandemic during the Fox 24 TV Family Day Festival at the State Fair.

The Get Ready campaign, sponsored by the American Public Health Association (APHA), provides information, resources and tools to individuals, families and communities in the United States. Their goal is for people to be prepared for a potential influenza pandemic, outbreak of an emerging infectious disease, or other hazards or disasters such as tornados.

At the booth over 300 parents and kids were given bookmarkers with informational links to find out more about the Get Ready campaign and a list of items that would be needed to have on hand in case of a pandemic outbreak in their community. There were also interactive activities for the kids to participate in and handouts were given to everyone that stopped at the booth.

Citizens of ND were able to learn more about public health activities and about NDPHA.

The booth was manned by Sue Brandvold, Nancy Bryn, Maureen Roden, and Vonnie Ereth. Thank you for a wonderful job!

## Together Rx Access Improves Prescription Access for Uninsured North Dakotans

Amy Niles, Chair  
Medical Relations and Advocacy



*About 10,000 People Enroll Each Week in the Free Prescription Savings Program*

Public health professionals know firsthand the struggles that uninsured North Dakotans face every day in gaining access to quality healthcare. In the state of North Dakota, more than 72,000 people, or 12 percent of the population, do not have healthcare coverage.\* These individuals and their families may have difficulty paying for the prescription medicines they need to stay healthy and to treat many common conditions such as asthma, high cholesterol and diabetes.

To help people without prescription coverage access the medicines they need, leading pharmaceutical companies sponsor the Together Rx Access® Program. This free prescription savings program helps eligible individuals and their families gain access to *immediate and meaningful* savings on prescription products right at their neighborhood pharmacy.

“By providing immediate and meaningful savings on prescription medicines, the Together Rx Access Card helps individuals and families take care of what’s most important – their health,” said Roba Whiteley, Executive Director of Together Rx Access. “The value of the Card is evident by the number of uninsured people who enroll every week – about 10,000.”

### Meaningful Savings and Simple Eligibility Criteria

Most cardholders save 25 to 40 per-

cent<sup>†</sup> on brand-name prescription products. More than 300 brand-name prescription products are included in the Program.<sup>‡</sup> Savings are also available on a wide range of generics. Medicines in the Program include those used to treat high cholesterol, diabetes, depression, asthma, and many other common conditions. The Card is free to get and free to use.

Individuals may be eligible for the Together Rx Access Card if they do not qualify for Medicare, do not have public or private prescription drug coverage, have a household income of up to \$30,000 for a single person or \$60,000 for a family of four (income eligibility is adjusted for family size), and are legal residents of the United States or Puerto Rico.

The Card is accepted at the majority of pharmacies nationwide and in Puerto Rico. Cardholders simply bring the Card to their neighborhood pharmacist along with their prescription, and the savings are calculated right at the pharmacy counter. More than 150 pharmacies in North Dakota accept the Card.

There are three easy ways to enroll:

- Visit [TogetherRxAccess.com](http://TogetherRxAccess.com)
- Call 1-800-250-2839
- Complete a short paper application and return it by mail

A Together Rx Access quick start savings card is also available. Potential enrollees simply detach the Card from a brochure and call the toll-free number to find out if they are eligible, enroll and instantly activate their Card. To receive a supply of quick start savings cards, contact Amy Niles, Chair, Medical Relations and Advocacy, Together Rx Access at [amyniles@aol.com](mailto:amyniles@aol.com).

### Helping Connect People to PPA and Free Healthcare Services

Together Rx Access also directs individuals to the Partnership for Prescription Assistance (PPA), a clearinghouse for more than 475 public and private assistance programs, including 180 offered by pharmaceutical companies. Those who are eligible for the Together Rx Access Card may qualify for additional savings on prescription medicines, or even free medicines, through other patient assistance programs in the PPA. The PPA also connects people to free health clinics in their community.

### How Public Health Professionals Can Help the Uninsured

Public health professionals play an important role in educating uninsured people about prescription assistance programs like Together Rx Access. Following are simple ways to get involved in increasing awareness about Together Rx Access:

- Determine eligibility by reviewing the Together Rx Access Card qualifications together
- Direct eligible individuals to the website [TogetherRxAccess.com](http://TogetherRxAccess.com) to enroll online
- Provide the Together Rx Access toll-free number 1-800-250-2839 to eligible individuals  
Distribute quick start savings cards to eligible individuals

One-on-one communications is an effective way to engage individuals and families who are uninsured. For this very reason, public health professionals are well suited to inform potential enrollees about the Program as they engage in personal conversations with uninsured North Dakotans on a regular basis.

For more information, visit:  
[www.TogetherRxAccess.com](http://www.TogetherRxAccess.com)

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# Capacity Building Initiative

Debbie Swanson

Strategic planning, business planning and board development, oh my! These are just a few of the topics that have been a part of technical assistance sessions offered by the American Public Health Association for Public Health affiliates working to strengthen their organizations. The North Dakota Public Health Association has benefited from the technical assistance training as well as the capacity building funding, beginning with a strategic planning session held in Minot on May 2, 2008.

Our goals include increasing membership and greater member involvement. We need to have both! Strengthening the voice of public health in the policy arena is another focus area and we are fortunate to have many tools available. Strategic partnership between NDPHA and your organizations will lead us to achieving our goals. Watch for some exciting opportunities to become engaged in NDPHA: as a committee member, officer, volunteer with the Get Ready Campaign, submitting articles for the newsletter, or attending an advocacy event.

## Advocacy, Advocacy, Advocacy

We all depend on robust funding to deliver public health programs and make a difference in North Dakota and in our communities. Think about it, where would we be without the important funding from the federal, state and local governments that support us? I can't imagine life without seat belts, HIV/AIDS education, food guide pyramids, fluoridated water, immunizations, lead screening, or laws that protect our food, water, air and land - and the list goes on.

Advocacy starts with education. Telling a story about your public health successes as well as the challenges will help our elected officials understand the work that we do. First, we must be knowledgeable about the political process and I invite you to do just that.

The American Public Health Association has numerous tools available for public health professionals engaged in advocacy activities. Visiting their website at [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org) and clicking on the Public Health Action Campaign (PHACT) will lead you to a wealth of useful fact sheets, tips and even the do's and don'ts for visiting Congressional Offices.

Watch for a fact sheet about public health in North Dakota coming soon. I expect this will be a useful tool when we head into the 2009 ND legislative session. Speaking of that - please be sure to mark your calendars for February 10, 2009 - Public Health Day at the Legislature. It promises to be bigger and better this year!

Strategic planning, business planning and board development, oh my!

Advocacy starts with education

## New Chance to Save Lives in North Dakota



This year, thanks to the work of several dedicated public-health champions, we have a new opportunity to reduce the human and economic toll of tobacco addiction in North Dakota. On April 15, North Dakota began receiving new Tobacco Settlement payments called “**Strategic Contribution Fund**” payments. Each year through 2017, North Dakota will receive \$14 million from the Strategic Contribution Fund.

Most North Dakotans clearly feel the first priority for spending “Tobacco Settlement” funds should be to save lives by helping folks quit smoking and keeping kids from starting. Polling results have shown that ND citizens overwhelmingly want a sufficient amount of Tobacco Settlement dollars dedicated to prevent tobacco-caused deaths.

Unfortunately, over the past decade, officials have spent 90% of North Dakota’s \$260 million in Tobacco Settlement money on projects having nothing to do with tobacco prevention – and, in fact, nothing to do with any kind of health promotion.

This summer, signatures are being gathered for a “**Support Tobacco Prevention**” (STP) ballot measure to ensure that these new strategic contribution funds are used as they were intended – to implement effective tobacco control, including helping people quit smoking, and helping prevent kids and adults from starting to smoke.

Specifically, the measure calls for fully funding a comprehensive Centers for Disease Control (CDC)-based tobacco control program. Because this is a proven, science-based program, our state’s inci-

dence of heart attacks, lung cancer, emphysema and other diseases will decline as a result. Lives will literally be saved.

Other states that have made this commitment have seen their youth and adult tobacco-use rates drop. And, just as predicted, when they sustained the CDC’s proven strategies over time, they achieved disparately high reductions in tobacco-caused diseases such as lung cancer. For example, in California, home to the longest-running comprehensive program, the number of new cases of lung cancer has been declining four times faster than in the rest of the country – but in North Dakota lung cancer deaths are actually increasing.

Former ND Attorney General Heidi Heitkamp chairs the STP measure’s 56-member sponsoring committee, which also includes UND President Charles E. Kupchella; former State Health Officer Robert M. Wentz; two former Directors of the State Tobacco Control Program, Kathleen Mangskau and Jeanne Prom; and numerous medical doctors from around the state.

The purpose and stated intent of North Dakota’s Tobacco Settlement payments was to help our citizens quit smoking and help prevent smoking in our kids and adults. It is time to do what’s right.

It’s not too late to help—By joining the effort to collect the signatures required for this “STP” measure, you will help to give the public health community the tools necessary to save lives by reducing the number of people harmed by tobacco addiction in our state. If you would like to sign the petition to get this important issue on the November ballot, contact me at 845-5197, or [buhr@csicable.net](mailto:buhr@csicable.net).

Sharon E. Buhr  
President, Tobacco-Free North Dakota  
Valley City, ND



## Fargo and West Fargo Clear the Air

By Bette Deede,  
Fargo Cass Public Health

Voters in Fargo and West Fargo resoundingly demonstrated their support for smoke-free workplaces on June 10, 2008. Fargo passed an initiated measure with 61% of the vote, West Fargo with 57% of a citizen's advisory vote. West Fargo City Commissioners approved the ordinance at the following meeting. The new ordinances extend the present smoking ban to the indoor spaces of bars, truck stops and public access rentals/leases. They became effective on July 1, and apply to 59 businesses in both cities. Employees and customers are free to smoke outside, as there is no outdoor provision in the law. Fargo and West Fargo are the first comprehensive smoke-free workplace cities in North Dakota.

The campaign for a comprehensive ordinance began almost a year ago at the city commission level in both cities. The West Fargo City Commission voted to reject the smoke-free ordinance, and then sent the measure to an advisory vote ballot in that city. The West Fargo ordinance was contingent upon the passage of the same ordinance in Fargo.

The Minnesota smoke-free workplace law became effective October 1.

Through an arduous, complex series of events; in December, the Fargo City Commission placed two measures on the June primary election ballot petitioned by a group of bar owners. The first would change the city's Home Rule Charter to state that initiated ordinances adopted by voters can't be repealed or amended except by a vote of the people. The second would re-enact the existing partial smoking ban.

In March, Share the Air citizen's group and SAFE – Smoke-Free Air for Everyone – Coalition turned in petitions that placed a comprehensive smoking ban on the Fargo June ballot.

The ensuing campaign was predictable with regard to similar smoking ban campaign in other cities. The bar owners concentrated their efforts on paid media, especially television and radio. Their "yes-no-yes" voting instruction message was also displayed on portable signs throughout the city. SAFE Coalition sent four direct mail pieces to identified voters and also made phone calls to those who indicated support of the more complete smoking ban. Earned media played an important role. SAFE initiated four press conferences to promote the smoke-free measure and encourage a "no" vote on the partial ban. Letters to the Editor and radio ads were also a noteworthy part of the SAFE campaign. Both sides utilized campaign websites.

The Fargo Forum Editorial Board consistently supported efforts for a comprehensive smoke-free ordinance.

Ultimately, the voters of Fargo and West Fargo mandated at the June Primary election that comprehensive smoke-free measures be adopted in both cities, to become effective July 1.

Fargo Cass Public Health provided those affected businesses with a Smoke-Free Toolkit to facilitate the change. It included guidelines for implementation and signage, along with cessation references.