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# ND PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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The mission of the North Dakota Public Health Association is to improve, promote, and protect health for residents of North Dakota through leadership in policy, partnerships and best practices.



## Message from the President-Elect Sue Brandvold, First District Health Unit

### Building the Foundation for a Healthy America

Our nation's health is in poor shape, even though we spend more on health care than any other country. In light of our failing health system, National Public Health Week (NPHW) 2009 raises awareness of public health's critical role in restoring and ensuring a healthy America.

#### **Your Nation:**

We all want the healthiest nation possible. In an ideal America, every person has access to health services, healthy lifestyles are embraced, our public health infrastructure is fully funded and operational, and social and economic factors that have an impact on health are addressed in a timely and impactful manner. By committing ourselves to creating a strong public health system, we can establish a solid foundation for a healthier future.

#### **Your Community**

The places where we live---our communities---can have a large influence on our health. Where we live affects the air we breathe, the number of places we have to be physically active, the quality of our education, and the availability of healthy foods and preventive service. Public health at the community level provides an opportunity to address many of the broader issues that impact health across our nation.

#### **Your Workplace**

We spend just as much, if not more time in our workplaces than at home. Health and safety in the workplace are just as important as health and safety in our homes. From worksite wellness programs aimed at helping workers

**NDPHA CELEBRATES 65 YEARS  
IN 2009!  
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## CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF THE NORTH DAKOTA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Maureen Roden, SWDHU, Historian

"...here we are in 2009. 65 years of making a small, determined group grow into an Association that people know and respect."

The North Dakota Public Health Association was born on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1944. Their first big Annual Meeting was held on October 12<sup>th</sup> 1944, at the Masonic Hall in Bismarck. One of the items on the agenda was post war planning in Public Health Nursing. An association meeting followed. Membership cards were sent out with the meeting notice. There were already 114 Charter Members. Their goal was to have 100% attendance at the meeting, which lasted from 8:30 am till noon. There was an initiation meeting before the regular meeting of the day.

In 1954, the annual meeting was already a 2-day event. It was held in Jamestown, ND. There were 110 members at that time.

By 1964, the annual meeting/conference was a 3-day event in Fargo, with speakers on such topics as "Medical Effects of Nuclear Weapons", "Health Mobilization and the Disaster Environment", "International Travel and Immunization". The conference started off with an Invocation by a local Reverend. The membership stood at 167. The word was getting out.

In 1974, it was still ok to pray. The conference was scheduled for 3 days in Jamestown. Many of the local businesses helped sponsor the conference. Some topics that year: "How Public Television Could Contribute to Health Services in North Dakota", "Automobile First Aid Kits", "Alcohol Problems in ND", and "Health Legisla-

tion". The membership stood at 194. NDPHA was still growing; and so was their strength in the communities they were serving.

In 1984 they discovered the Western edge of ND, and came to Dickinson. Dick Hildebrand was the Master of Ceremonies. Many (10) of the present day staff at Southwestern District Health in Dickinson, were on the "Local Arrangements" committee. By now, the membership had skyrocketed to 235. Talk about strength, recognition, and the people to make things happen!

In 1994, NDPHA celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Fargo. Many Universities were sponsoring the Conference as well as the ND Academy of Physician Assistants. Some of the topics were: Recruitment, Medication Reduction on Older Adults, Rural Pharmacies, Long Term Care Task Force Update, and Types of Dementia. The membership was down to 198. Many members were retiring, moving on. The need for recruitment was discussed.

2004 the conference was in Fargo again. There were 33 Exhibitors. Financial contributors were some of the State's largest Businesses, Universities, and Health Care Agencies. Keynote speakers were nationally known in their fields. Even Sara Schelkoph, the "Dancing Nurse" from UND spoke on "Nurses for our Nation". Sara was an RN, BSN at Altru at the time. Membership was down to 153 members,

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with 10 of those being Lifetime Members. It was time to do some recruiting! The task was attacked.

And now, here we are in 2009. 65 years of making a small, determined group grow into an Association that people know and respect.

There are 230 members; 13 of those are Lifetime Members. The work of the North Dakota Public Health Association does not get done without the constant, continued, high quality commitment of its Governing Council, it's

Committee Members, and it's Charter Members. Their dedication to our small communities is the reason we did not go through with our planned Conference in March of this year. The State was facing floods on many fronts. We were all needed in our own communities, or in someone else's. And we did it with pride, as usual. Personal sacrifice was made by many to help where help was needed.

The next many years should be as exciting, and filled with growth, as were the last 65 years. We all look forward to a terrific Conference next spring.

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live healthy lives, to safety regulations aimed at keeping them safe on the job, public health works to address health concerns facing us in all aspects of our lives.

**Your School**

We will do anything to protect our children, especially their health. Since they spend most of their days at school and around other children, it is important to understand how public health affects them. They, too, rely on public health so they can do *their* job---learning.

**Your Home**

Good health starts in the home. From the time we're born, and even before, public health is working to protect our families across generations. Whether it's receiving immunizations and other preventive services from a trusted health provider, living in lead-free homes, eating safe foods, or being cared for at home as we age, public health is a part of every aspect of our lives.

Have a great spring and continue to Prevent, Promote and Protect the great state of North Dakota in all that you do in your Public Health workplace.

**SAVE THE DATE**

The North Dakota Public Health Association has rescheduled the 2009 Annual Meeting for June 5th in Bismarck. Watch your email for details.

“We have found that all of this does pay off and the community is more aware of public health and the services public health provides to keep families and communities healthy.”

## Bismarck Burleigh Public Education Committee

Connie Griffin, RN

Bismarck Burleigh Public Health has an active Public Education Committee that meets monthly. This committee may focus on the subject of the month, such as “Heart Month”, etc. or may focus on the needs of the community, such as “Preparedness”.

The committee generates a newsletter every month, table tent information for client information in the office, and also a one page information sheet for the restroom stalls. The restroom stall information was started a few years ago by our school nurses in their respective schools. The restroom stall information was so well received that it has been expanded to include the restrooms of most city departments and Burleigh County Social Services. We also try to make a visual appearance on our local TV Morning Show once a month to educate the viewers on various topics. We also meet with the local Bismarck Tribune health writer to get articles of interest printed.

We highly encourage the community to view our website at [www.bismarck.org/publichealth](http://www.bismarck.org/publichealth) for the most up to date information on programs and our newsletters, as well as fact sheets.

We have found that all of this does pay off and the community is more aware of public health and the services public health provides to keep families and communities healthy. These combined things meet our Vision: To be a recognized leader promoting, protecting, and providing for the public’s health. It also meets our Mission: of planning and promoting health and safety for all residents through disease and injury prevention.

Bismarck Burleigh Public Health coordinated a Flood Information Hotline in order to manage the influx of flood information calls within Bismarck and Burleigh County during the recent flood events. This effort enabled departments to continue day to day business as well as emergency response during a time when staffing resources were strained due to blizzards and flooding. The city and county departments have expressed gratitude for the relief in handling the pressure of the calls that they may have received otherwise. The public expressed their thanks to the hotline workers for providing answers to questions ranging from where to get sandbags to road closures and countless other messages. A total of approximately 9,156 calls were handled through the flood call line. We had 6 stations which were covered 6 hours each over a 24 hour period for 2 days, the amount of lines and workers were reduced as calls subsided.

## Public Health Day at the Legislature

By Debbie Swanson, RN



Although the weather outside was frightful, inside the smell of bagels toasting was delightful! North Dakota legislators came to enjoy their healthy breakfast and start the busy day with conversation around the theme of "Expand Your Mind, Change Our World" during NDPHA Public Health Day at the Legislature on February 10, 2009.

The success of the event was made possible by the many participating members who provided displays, information and



advocacy throughout the day in the Memorial Hall, in the Senate and House Chambers, and in the hallways of the Capitol. Nursing students from UND planned many details of the day and provided posters and a display on public health and NDPHA.

A new feature this year was an advocacy workshop jointly sponsored by NDPHA and the North Dakota Nurses Association (NDNA) on February 9 at the Radisson in Bismarck. NDNA lobbyist, Karen McDonald and for-



mer legislator Wanda Rose, provided information on the legislative process and how a bill becomes a law. Members enjoyed an opportunity to network with other health professionals in a casual environment.

More than 70 students from NDSU, the University of Mary, and MedCenter One schools of nursing were there to learn about policy development in action and the role that professional organizations play in shaping health policy.

## ATHENA AWARDED TO DEBBIE SWANSON

Debbie Swanson, RN received the Regional 2009 ATHENA Award. This award honors individuals who strive toward the highest levels of personal and professional accomplishment, who excel in their chosen field, devote time and energy to their community in a meaningful way, and forge paths of leadership for other women to follow.

Debbie is a member of the American Public Health Association (APHA), the ND Nurses Association, Sigma Theta Tau Nurses Honor Society, and the ND Public Health Association (NDPHA) currently serving as the APHA Affiliate Representative to Governing Council. She co-wrote and coordinated submission of the APHA capacity building grant for NDPHA in 2006, and is currently the project director to facilitate implementation of these grant activities at a state-wide level.

She is a North Dakota native and has been a nurse at the Grand Forks Public Health Department for 24 years. Her goal as the Nursing and Nutrition Supervisor is to improve the health of Grand Forks County residents and to be a good role model for health.

Debbie is married and the mother of two children, Geoffrey and Stephanie. She lives in Grand Forks with her husband, Howard.

## NURSING CONFERENCE BRINGS NATION'S EXPERTS TO GRAND FORKS

Becky Cournia

University of North Dakota College of Nursing

National nursing experts will be in Grand Forks, ND, May 18-20 to take part in the Midwest Nurse Educator's Academy. The event is being held at the Alerus Center.

The conference, which brings together nurse educators from across the nation, aims to help educators develop faculty skills and provide education on the technology that is changing the face of nursing education - clinical simulation. Clinical simulation is quickly becoming a key educational tool in nursing programs across the country. Healthcare has progressed to the point where prevention of disease and serious illness is the focus. Very few patients stay in hospitals for an extended period of time and, as a result, the clinical experiences available to nursing students present few opportunities for care.

Through the use of clinical simulation equipment, students have the opportunity to learn hands-on what it takes to work in an emergency situation, how to diagnose more effectively and ultimately to be better prepared for any critical situation they could face. These simulations help to make students more efficient in their approach to patient care.

"We are very excited about this conference," said Helen Melland, interim dean of nursing.

"This conference is the first of its kind for North Dakota," shares Cheryl Stauffenecker, project coordinator. "LPNs to PhD-prepared nurses have collaborated on the planning to offer enhanced learning opportunities for educators, as well as strengthening educator-to-educator partnerships."

All attendees will be given hands-on simulation opportunities and will learn how to incorporate this exciting new technology into their nursing curriculum. This will be a wonderful opportunity to connect with colleagues experiencing similar issues and to network with experts in the world of nursing academia.

Keynote speakers include Pamela Jeffries, associate dean for academic affairs at Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, who 'wrote the book' on clinical simulation in nursing and Christine Keenan, education coordinator at Washington Hospital Center in Arlington, VA, who is nationally known for her work with simulation education.

"We are excited to be a part of this groundbreaking event," shares Pat Traynor, president of Dakota Medical Foundation. "This event links directly with our mission to improve health and access to healthcare services. Nurse educators are coming together to learn new and more efficient ways of educating tomorrow's workforce. The knowledge gained will have a direct impact on how new nurses will deliver healthcare."

Nearly 200 nurse educators from across the region have already registered for this stimulating conference. For further information or to register <http://www.conted.und.edu/nurseeducator/>

The conference is sponsored by the University of North Dakota College of Nursing, the North Dakota Nursing Education Consortium, Partners Investing in Nursing's Future, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Dakota Medical Foundation.

"This conference is the first of its kind for North Dakota," shares Cheryl Stauffenecker, project coordinator.

"...Nurse educators are coming together to learn new and more efficient ways of educating tomorrow's workforce..."

## RAISE AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN OUR DAILY LIVES

From the time we're born, public health is working to protect our families across the generations. Whether it's receiving immunizations and other preventive services from a trusted health provider, living in lead-free homes, eating safe foods or being cared for at home as we age, public health is a part of every aspect of our lives. This is the story that the Healthiest Nation in One Generation video tells - it is the story of public health.

Today, think about how public health provides the foundation for healthy families and homes. How can you take this information and raise awareness of the importance of public health in our daily lives?

Here are some tips to get you started:

Raise awareness. Housing conditions can significantly affect public health. Make sure your community knows it is important to have our homes inspected for lead, mold and other potential health hazards.

Encourage your family to spend less time watching TV and more time being active together. Most children spend more than five hours a day watching television, using the computer or playing video games. Lead by example - get up and get moving today!

Discuss the importance of healthy eating with your family. Build the foundation for a lifetime of healthy eating habits by helping your family learn the importance of good nutrition.

Research what preventive health services are recommended for you and your family members. Thanks to high rates of immunizations, the United States currently has record, or near record, low cases of vaccine-preventable diseases. Talk to your family, friends and social network about the importance of vaccinations.

Excerpt from APHA Website  
2009 Public Health Week

