

# What's New at PHSC October 2004

The 2004-2005 Executive Board elections are here! Thank you all of those who expressed interest in PHSC, and we hope that you will find additional ways to stay involved.

After much hard work the Nominations Committee has chosen several excellent candidates for the leadership positions of President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer:

President Elect:

Jabar Akbar

Rebecca Love

Secretary:

Amy Boore

Kimberly McGee

Treasurer: Darren Mays (unopposed)

Your vote is essential to the voting process. Please take a moment and visit the link <http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB223UAZRBK3W>, which will take you to the online voting survey. Here, you can read a short personal statement written by each of the candidates and submit your vote for each position. If you have problems with the link, or with the survey, please email Elizabeth Bernabeo, MPH, Chair of the Nominations Committee at [nominations@phsc.org](mailto:nominations@phsc.org) for assistance.

The elections will run for two weeks from October 8th - 22nd, 2004, and winners will be announced on November 7th.

Thank you for your time and continued interest in the strong leadership of PHSC.

## Flu Vaccine Shortages

Over the course of the last month various headlines in the news have called our attention to a lack of available flu vaccines for the coming winter. What happened? An American company operating in the UK called Chiron, identified that its flu vaccines were manufactured incorrectly and were contaminated with a bacteria called serratia. The United Kingdom publicly announced that it would not be purchasing vaccines from Chiron, and the US followed suit.

As a result of this, the US is now experiencing a sharp decrease in the number of available flu shots, yet the UK is not. Why is this? "public health experts have long cautioned against the country's dependence on a few vaccine makers, and yet this has become standard practice. There are now only two major manufacturers for the nation's supply of flu vaccine, and at least a half-dozen other vaccines are made by single suppliers. Britain, by contrast, has spread its order for flu vaccines among five suppliers, precisely to avoid the kind of predicament America now faces." (With Few Suppliers of Flu Shots, Shortage Was Long in Making. Denise Grady, NY Times 10/16/04). As a result of this you can urge your legislators to push for

purchasing vaccines from multiple companies to avoid this kind of situation again; and also to advocate for more incentives for vaccine manufacturers to remain in the market given unprofitability. Grady goes on to explain that this problem is mitigated by the fact that there is no real supervision regarding the distribution of vaccines, the process is handled by the pharmaceutical companies themselves. Problems occur when not enough companies stay in the market, the government relies on too few companies to provide vaccines. Currently, the US is relying on the products from 2 companies, Aventis Pasteur, and Medimmune both of which will provide for about half the needed doses.

Grady also goes on to explain how the Bush Administration has increased its budget for increasing research for flu vaccines to \$283 million, but questions remain, do we need to spend an extra \$236 million on vaccine research? Or do we need spend our money on ensuring a greater availability of doses from multiple sources?

## The AMA and Prescription Drugs

During late October the American Medical Association has begun to call for negotiation of drug prices by the government. This is in response to the clause in the Medicare Modernization and Improvement Act of 2003 that prevents the government from negotiating prescription drug discounts. The policy implication of this restriction disallows any kind of saving with respect to prescription drugs by the government. Let your voice be heard, urge your legislators to spend your tax money wisely!

## Primary Care Week 2004

### Caring for the Underserved: Careers in Community Health

NPCW is an effort to expose students who are in the early stages of their career planning to some of the rewarding and fulfilling options available in the field of primary care. Throughout the week, health professions students will be introduced to role models in the field and hear about exciting careers opportunities.

As primary care is fundamentally an issue of public health, public health professionals fulfill a vital role in recognizing the need for and implementing adequate health care plans for underserved communities. Even just hosting one National Primary Care Week event will facilitate a dialogue regarding the need for comprehensive primary care for all Americans, and specifically in rural and underserved settings. We feel that your peers would significantly benefit from this week, as they will have the opportunity to explore the myriad of career opportunities open to public health professional in the field of community health. Additionally, hosting a community health fair or outreach event will give students the opportunity to interact with those in within their community who are most gravely affected by the lack of primary care physicians and health professionals.

### **PLEASE CONSIDER SERVING AS YOUR SCHOOL'S 2004 NPCW COORDINATOR!**

For more information please see the NPCW web page at: <http://www.amsa.org/programs/npcw/>

To sign up to be the NPCW Student Representative from your school visit:

<http://www.amsa.org/programs/npcw/signup.cfm>

For any questions, be sure to email Stephanie at [npcw@www.amsa.org](mailto:npcw@www.amsa.org).

**WALK THE HILL FOR PUBLIC HEALTH!**  
**Recruit TEN People to Walk the Halls of Capitol Hill on November 9!**

On November 9, APHA wants thousands of public health professionals to walk the halls of Capitol Hill to tell Congress, **it's time to make public health funding a national priority!**

Walking the halls of Capitol Hill on November 9 provides an excellent opportunity for the public health community to address the under funding of public health. Our actions have the potential to both influence legislation, and send a clear, strong public health message to the incumbent and newly elected members of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress.

We need your help to make this day a success. In order to reach our participation goals at the hill day, APHA needs **you** to commit to help recruit people to attend! **We are asking public health professionals who believe that Congress is not fully aware of the implications of under funding public health to recruit TEN people to attend the hill day!**

If you plan on recruiting ten people for public health please let us know by emailing [grassroots@apha.org](mailto:grassroots@apha.org). **Please e-mail your name, telephone number, e-mail and the state in which you live.**

To learn more about APHA's Walk the Hill for Public Health visit <http://www.apha.org/legislative/walkhill/index.htm>.