

# What's New at PHSC September 2004

Hello, allow me to introduce myself, my name is Kate Maggioncalda and I am co-chair of the PHSC Action Committee. My main interests in health policy concern elder care, but I am also interested in general access to health care. This is a monthly newsletter that will discuss a few of the main issues going on with health care policy at the national level, and ways for you to participate in them.

## In the News

One can read in the New York Times about how the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 has touched off a four way tug of war between health care practitioners, patients, pharmaceutical companies, and insurance companies about which drugs will now be covered by Medicare.

On September 25, 2004, the New York Times also reported how the Bush Administration has decided to offer a faith-based health plan to federal employees that does not cover any of the following: abortion, artificial insemination, contraceptives, nor voluntary sterilization. While other plans will still be offered which cover these services, only the faith-based health care plan will offer a medical savings account. I strongly urge those who oppose this new measure to contact their legislators and let their voices be heard.

### **The Public Health Preparedness Workforce Development Act of 2004 Could Pay for Your Education**

This July, Senators Chuck Hagel (R-NE) and Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) co-sponsored the Public Health Preparedness Workforce Development Act of 2004, (PHPWD) S2613. This act if passed, will provide for scholarships and loan repayments for public health students (<http://www.astho.org/pubs/HagelDurbinnewsrelease.pdf>).

The PHPWD is in response to forecasted shortages of available public health workers who work at the federal, state or local level, due to individuals leaving jobs for higher pay, retirement, or new careers altogether, particularly in the fields of epidemiology, laboratory science, and public health nursing (<http://www.astho.org/pubs/WorkforceShortageReportFinal.pdf> p. 2, 7).

If passed, the Act will provide scholarships for students pursuing public health careers, and provide for loan repayments in exchange for serving in an underserved area (<http://www.astho.org/pubs/HagelDurbinnewsrelease.pdf>). Specifically, the Act will provide \$35 million per year for scholarships, and \$195 million per year for loan repayments. (<http://www.astho.org/pubs/HagelDurbinnewsrelease.pdf>). Eighty percent will be directed to encourage people to work at the local and state levels; and allows for bonus payments for those who will serve in underserved areas for three years

(<http://www.astho.org/pubs/HagelDurbinnewsrelease.pdf>,  
<http://www.astho.org/pubs/WorkforcebillS2613.pdf> p. 6 ).

Students who are eligible for scholarships must be US citizens, both part time/full time students are eligible, the school must be accredited, the degree or certificate earned must be for a health profession: laboratory sciences, epidemiology, environmental health, health communications, information sciences, and public administration (<http://www.astho.org/pubs/FactSheetwithDearColleague.pdf>).

Those who qualify for loan repayments can either be full/part time students, but must be in their final year of study, and have arranged to work at a federal, state or local level public health facility. Those who have graduated in the last decade and are also employed by a public health facility at the federal, state or local level are eligible (<http://www.astho.org/pubs/FactSheetwithDearColleague.pdf>). The program will cover up to \$35,000 or for those whose loans are less than \$105,000 the program will cover up to one third of the balance per year (<http://www.astho.org/pubs/WorkforcebillS2613.pdf> p. 7). I urge you to ask your legislators to support this bill!

## **Announcements**

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

National Primary Care Week is October 17-23, 2004. This year's theme is "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. Prior to and during National Primary Care Week, student coordinators plan and implement events and programming at their schools. 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.

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). Thanks! – AMSA

**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>.