

# PHSC PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT CAUCUS OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

## NEWS AND VIEWS

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### Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *PHSC News and Views*, the newsletter of the Public Health Student Caucus. The newsletter will be published quarterly and will contain various student fellowship and internship opportunities, job postings, updates on caucus business, as well as articles on specialties in public health, student concerns, and action alerts.

I invite you to submit articles, letters to the editor, announcements for student opportunities, job postings, action alerts, and ideas for topics you would like to see covered. Submissions for the next newsletter need to be received by June 1, 1997. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity, must be signed, and should include a telephone number or e-mail address.

*continued on page 8*

### APHA Annual Meeting 1996: *A Phenomenal Success!*



Former Advisory Board Members (pictured from left): Christine Haywood, Jeanne Alongi, Trong Nguyen, Deborah Suess, Jay Bernhardt, Maria Cervania

The 124<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the APHA was a phenomenal success for the Public Health Student Caucus. The Caucus held several business meetings and socials in New York City from November 17-21, 1996.

Several important public health leaders addressed the Caucus including APHA presidential candidates, Noreen Clark and Quentin Young, and APHA president, Barry Levy. Victoria McEvoy, founder of the original Caucus, enthusiastically presented

*continued on page 8*

## President's Column: The Next Generation of Public Health Leaders

Since I began my graduate studies in public health, the American health and medical care systems have undergone radical transformation. In fact, much of the information I learned in a Health Care Organization and Administration class a few years ago is no longer relevant! Now more than ever, public health leaders are needed to come together and fulfill our role as defenders of the public's health.

We need leaders who understand and advocate for our core values including health, equity, diversity, empowerment, integrity, dignity, and knowledge for individuals and communities (APHA Strategic Plan, 1996), but who also understand systemic realities and strategies of effective and successful advocacy. Unfortunately, there are few leadership development programs available for public health students.

If we are to reverse this trend, we must start anew with the next generation of potential leaders. The Public Health Student Caucus is taking several steps to help develop future leaders in public health. We are sponsoring leadership development sessions at the 1997 APHA Annual Meeting; we are recruiting public health professionals to serve as mentors for students from related disciplines; and, we are organizing a networking database to facilitate connection between today's students who are our future leaders.

As an individual, there are many simple things you can do to develop your leadership skills. You can get involved with organizations at your school or in your community, or with your APHA Section, Affiliate, or Caucus. In doing so, you can make a difference while gaining valuable experience, knowledge, skills, and connections.

In addition, you can undertake efforts, no matter how small, to challenge the status quo. Just two years ago, this Caucus did not exist! With hard work, dedication, and a driving desire, several people came together to make a difference. So, rather than be ambivalent toward problems or injustices, try to do something about it. Even through failure, you can gain experience that will be beneficial the next time you try.

Jay M. Bernhardt, MPH  
PHSC President  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## Dr.P.H. or Ph.D.: Which Degree is Right for You?

by Michael Fagen, MPH, University of Illinois at Chicago

There seems to be some confusion in schools of public health regarding the two major doctoral degrees: the DrPH (Doctor of Public Health) and the PhD (Doctor of Philosophy). In order to clear up some of this confusion, I decided to ask my fellow public health students for their opinions on this subject. I posted a message to the PHSC listserv and also had a conversation with Dean Susan Scrimshaw of my home institution, the University of Illinois at Chicago. There was general agreement on the following distinctions between the two degrees:

**Purpose:** The DrPH is designed to prepare students for leadership roles as public health practitioners, while the PhD prepares researchers and teachers. Current practitioners are often encouraged to pursue the DrPH, building on experience gained in their practice settings.

**Scope:** The DrPH is a breadth degree, designed to steep students in all the major areas of public health. Conversely, the PhD is a depth degree that allows students to pursue a narrower area of scholarly interest. Preliminary/comprehensive examinations should reflect this distinction.

**Recognition:** The DrPH is widely recognized and respected in public health circles. The PhD is recognized and understood in many settings, including public health, academia, and industry.

**Employment:** DrPH's generally take leadership jobs in public health practice settings, sometimes teaching and researching in schools of public health. PhD's generally teach and research in schools of public health or other academic settings, sometimes taking jobs in industry or public health practice settings.

What is probably clear by now is that the distinctions between these two degrees are not fixed. Moreover, different schools seem to have different interpretations regarding the meanings of the DrPH and PhD. Until some clearer standards are developed, my best advice to students choosing between the two degrees is to research specific schools and programs. Match your choice of degree program to your academic and career goals.

*Editor's note: To continue this dialogue, e-mail the author directly (mfagen1@uic.edu), or post messages to the PHSC listserv (phsc@unc.edu).*

## Effective Advocacy

The APHA regularly issues action alerts asking for members' help in contacting legislators about key policy issues. Perhaps you have wondered about the best way to contact these legislators. Then these tips from the APHA on writing effective letters to policy makers will help.

Keep letters to single typed or legibly written page. Do not use form letters, and cover only one topic or issue per letter. Be sure to state the purpose at the outset of the letter and enclose editorials, position papers, or other supporting documents. In the body of the letter, mention the legislation by its bill number. The letter should be polite, to the point, and give reasons for supporting your position. Ask policy makers for a response. Always identify yourself and your organization. It is also helpful if you provide a courtesy copy of your correspondence to your organization. At the close of the letter, thank the legislator for his/her cooperation. Send a note of approval when the issue is supported. Please address your senator or representative as follows:

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_:

To find your senators and representatives, check these two web sites, <http://www.senate.gov> and <http://www.house.gov>. Now that you know how to write an effective letter, keep checking this newsletter, the APHA web site, and *The Nation's Health* for action alerts and start writing. Remember every voice is important, and your support does count!

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**Check out the PHSC *on-line!***  
**<http://www.sph.unc.edu/caucus>**

## Overview of the Caucus

The American Public Health Association is a professional society representing more than 30,000 public health professionals, service providers, researchers, administrators, teachers, and students, from a wide range of disciplines. The association provides for professional exchange, study, and action through its Annual Meeting, Section activities, publications, and advocacy.

The 5,000 student members of the APHA have many interests and needs that are not addressed by the existing APHA infrastructure. Therefore, we have organized a Public Health Student Caucus where people interested in public health student issues can come together and work for our common goals. APHA defines a caucus simply as a group of 15 or more APHA members, partisans of a particular position on an issue important to APHA, who pursue a desired result within the Association. The Public Health Student Caucus was officially recognized by APHA in January 1996.

Our challenge is that student members of APHA do not remain students for very long. Previous APHA student caucuses have folded due to lack of volunteer leadership and geographically diverse membership. Therefore, for us to succeed, it is imperative that students and recent graduates get involved. We consider ourselves a grassroots organization: run by students, for students.

We have established the following objectives: to encourage the exchange of ideas, experiences, school information, award opportunities, and job opportunities; to facilitate communication primarily through electronic media; to recruit more students to join the Caucus and APHA from public health schools, programs, and other related disciplines; to facilitate leadership development among APHA student members; to encourage more student involvement in APHA governing; to sponsor and co-sponsor award competitions for student papers; to sponsor and co-sponsor sessions at the APHA Annual Meeting; to promote a continuing dialogue on public health student curricula; to develop and promote public health policies and positions; to encourage publications of student papers in the *American Journal of Public Health*; and to produce and disseminate a directory of Caucus members.

## World Health Day

### What is World Health Day?

World Health Day provides a forum for information and discussion about health conditions worldwide. Its objective, as established by the World Health Organization (WHO), is “Health for All by the Year 2000.” It is observed annually on April 7 in the 190 member countries of WHO. The Director-General of WHO chooses the World Health Day theme based on recommendations submitted by member countries. The selected themes reflect conditions that threaten the health of individuals worldwide.

### History of World Health Day

The designation of World Health Day was one of the first official acts of WHO. First observed on July 22, 1948, World Health Day was later changed to April 7, the day the official constitution of WHO was formally adopted. Since 1950, World Health Day has focused on a specific global issue each year. As one of its world objectives, WHO, based in Geneva, Switzerland, strives to attain the highest possible level of health for all of the people that it serves.

### World Health Day 1997

Infectious diseases are the world’s leading cause of premature death. Of the nearly 52 million deaths worldwide, infectious disease accounted for 17 million. The World Health Organization has designated the World Health Day 1997 topic as “Emerging and Re-Emerging Infectious Diseases” to focus the world on the present and future challenges associated with infectious diseases. While we have eliminated such diseases as smallpox worldwide and polio in the Western Hemisphere, many others are continuing to spread while others have recently emerged for the first time.

In the United States the slogan selected to promote World Health Day 1997 is “Emerging Infectious Diseases: Reduce the Risk.” As with many issues of health, education is a vital part of the battle against the spread infectious diseases. By learning what threats are posed by emerging infectious diseases and by changing our behavior, we can, through a partnership of families, community, organizations, health professionals, and educators, make a difference.

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### The Public Health Student Caucus would like to thank the following contributors:

University of Michigan — School of Public Health

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill — School of Public Health

New Jersey Graduate Program in Public Health

Student Union Board, UNC-CH School of Public Health

D. William Wood, MPH, PhD, Interim Dean and Professor  
University of Hawaii at Manoa School of Public Health

*In addition, thank-yous to the PHSC members who have contributed through the voluntary dues program. Your support is appreciated.*

*Christine Janel Haywood, PHSC Treasurer  
George Washington University*

## Planning Your World Health Day Event

1. **Get started by forming an organizing committee.** Identify individuals and organizations in your area who may be interested in planning a World Health Day event.
2. **Choose the activity.** Is there a specific infectious disease challenge that you are aware of in your community? If not, it is always appropriate to raise awareness of the importance of infectious disease prevention. Decide whether to have one centralized event or several small ones.
3. **Create a planning schedule.** Form World Health Day planning committees and subcommittees and assign various duties to these groups. Schedule dates and deadlines for planning your activities.
4. **Identify community resources and sources of talent.** Identify and use sources of talent and expertise in your community. Contact people early to give them plenty of preparation time. Decide on your financial needs and establish partnerships in the community for support.
5. **Set the date and implement the plan.** April 7 is World Health Day. However, we encourage you to plan observances throughout the year. Remember to promote “Emerging Infectious Diseases: Reduce the Risk” everyday with events throughout the year.
6. **Decide who will participate.** Determine the number of people you would like to attend your event. Encourage a wide variety of groups to attend.
7. **Publicize your event.** Submit news releases to newspapers and television and radio stations; produce and distribute posters and flyers; and announce your World Health Day event at other meetings.
8. **Choose the location.** You may need to reserve space in advance. Make sure the location is suited for the activity you are planning.
9. **Make hospitality arrangements.** Good hospitality will ensure a successful event. Prepare invitations, programs with acknowledgments, welcoming committees, name tags, giveaways from local businesses, and post-event appreciation notices for those who assisted. If possible provide refreshments during your activities. Remember, it’s better to begin modestly and succeed than to attempt too big a project and fail!
10. **Evaluate the day’s activities.** Did they accomplish what they intended to do? Was there successful coordination of events? What was the approximate number of people served by the program? How many volunteers helped, and were they well organized? List ways to improve future programs.

*If you would like to receive this documented Resource Booklet & free posters for your school or office, please send message to Venise Jackson (vejst1+@pitt.edu). Check the Caucus web site at <http://www.sph.unc.edu/caucus/> for more information on celebrating World Health Day. Information on World Health Day 1997 from American Association of World Health, World Health Day 1997 Resource Booklet.*



*Speakers addressing the PHSC at the 1996 APHA Annual Meeting (from left): Quentin Young, MD; Noreen Clark, PhD, MPH; Barry Levy, MD, MPH*

**National Public Health Week is April 7 through April 13, 1997!**

## Program Committee

Planning for APHA's 1997 Annual Meeting is well underway. This year the meeting is being held in Indianapolis from November 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>. The theme is "Communicating Public Health." As a Caucus, we will be sponsoring our very first academic sessions. This is especially exciting because APHA will be celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Start thinking now about joining us in Indianapolis. The Annual Meeting is an unparalleled opportunity for networking, professional development, exploration of new fields of interest, and getting your feet as a public health professional. The Public Health Student Caucus (PHSC) will be conducting a poster session of student research as well as an awards presentation for the best abstracts we received this year. Jay Bernhardt, PHSC President, is putting together a leadership session that will feature a panel of very distinguished leaders in public health including Barry Levy, the current APHA President. We are working on ways to make attendance as easy and productive as possible including socials, materials that tell you the secret "ins" and "outs" of the events, and a roommate network for people who want to save money by sharing lodging.

Watch the web pages (<http://www.sph.unc.edu/caucus/>) and the Newsletter for updates. If you have any ideas or questions or if you would like to volunteer, you can contact Jeanne Alongi, Chair of the Programming Committee, at [jalongi@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu](mailto:jalongi@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu).

**SEE YOU IN INDIANAPOLIS!!!**

## Get Involved!

One of the challenges the PHSC faces is maintaining a strong base of volunteer leadership. Since we are a grass-roots organization run by students, it is imperative that our members get involved. With few exceptions, committee membership is available on a voluntary basis to all Caucus members in good standing. Feel free to e-mail the following committee chairs or Maria Cervania, President-elect ([mcervania@uic.edu](mailto:mcervania@uic.edu)) for more information or to join a committee:

### Communications:

Deborah Suess, Secretary  
[drsuess@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu](mailto:drsuess@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu)

### Finance:

Christine Haywood, Treasurer  
[cjhaywood@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu](mailto:cjhaywood@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu)

### Programming:

Jeanne Alongi  
[jalongi@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu](mailto:jalongi@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu)

### Nominations:

Trong Nguyen  
[tnguyen@gibbs.oit.unc.edu](mailto:tnguyen@gibbs.oit.unc.edu)

### Membership:

Aaron Mendelsohn  
[aaron@edc1.gsph.pitt.edu](mailto:aaron@edc1.gsph.pitt.edu)

### Outreach:

Venise Jackson  
[vejst1+@pitt.edu](mailto:vejst1+@pitt.edu)

### Action:

currently open

## Membership

The Membership Committee is looking for students to help recruit members for the PHSC. All students are welcome to participate and are encouraged to recruit fellow students from their respective schools. Any student interested in serving on the Membership Committee should contact Aaron Mendelsohn at [aaron@edc1.gsph.pitt.edu](mailto:aaron@edc1.gsph.pitt.edu).

## Advertising Policy

PHSC News and Views is distributed to over 300 members and public health leaders. Don't miss out on this great chance to advertise your school, product, services, meeting, or program. The next publishing date is scheduled for mid-June. Space and material close on May 15 for the next Newsletter. Rates are for space only with camera ready ads supplied by the advertiser. Fees are due with advertising contract. For more information, contact Heather Young at (703)516-7067 or [youngh@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu](mailto:youngh@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu). **Rates** (for single publication — discounts available for multiple Newsletter contracts): Full page \$150; Half page \$75; Quarter page \$40.

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### PHSC News and Views

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or via e-mail to [caucus@unc.edu](mailto:caucus@unc.edu)

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## The Public Health Student Caucus Needs Your Help!

The Public Health Student Caucus needs your help! We are asking Caucus members to donate \$10 in voluntary dues to cover membership through the 1997 APHA Annual Meeting. If you are not a Caucus member, please give what you can to help us continue to serve and represent the student members of the APHA. Make checks payable to Public Health Student Caucus, P.O. Box 9313, Chapel Hill, NC 27515. Thanks for your support!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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### Please Give Us Feedback on this Newsletter!

Reactions and feedback from readers can help us plan future issues. Please fill out the following questionnaire and let us know what you think. Please return to: Heather Young, Editor, 1111 Arlington Blvd., #1010, Arlington, VA 22209 or e-mail [youngh@gwis2.circ.gwu](mailto:youngh@gwis2.circ.gwu). Thanks for your help.

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address / E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please rate this issue on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the best):  
\_\_\_\_\_ length of articles    \_\_\_\_\_ photos/graphics    \_\_\_\_\_ usefulness of content    \_\_\_\_\_ readability
- What did you like *best* about this issue?
- What did you like *least* about this issue?
- What topics would you like to see covered in future issues?

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### Join the APHA and PHSC Today!

Caucus membership is available to all APHA members. To join, please complete and return the following form or, if you prefer, you can send the requested information via e-mail to [caucus@unc.edu](mailto:caucus@unc.edu). Membership is currently free but a donation of \$10 is greatly appreciated from those who can afford it. If you are not a member of the APHA, you need to join before you can join the Caucus. APHA offers a discounted rate for students (\$50 per year) that is more than 50% off the regular membership price. All student members receive subscriptions to the American Journal of Public Health and The Nation's Health as well as discounted registration fees for the Annual Meeting. For APHA membership information, call Membership Information at (202)789-5674 or visit their web site at <http://www.apha.org>.

Please return this form to PHSC, P.O. Box 9313, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail the information to [caucus@unc.edu](mailto:caucus@unc.edu).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State / Province: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_  
University: \_\_\_\_\_  
Degree (sought): \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Current APHA Member? YES NO    APHA Primary Section: \_\_\_\_\_ APHA Member#: \_\_\_\_\_

## ..... APHA Annual Meeting 1996

the history of the Caucus and imparted the original Caucus papers to the current members. Marissa Cortes and Ruth Harris discussed internship opportunities sponsored by the Association of Schools of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In addition to planning for next year, the Caucus adopted bylaws and a voluntary dues policy and elected officers. Congratulations to the following PHSC members who were chosen as officers:

**President:** Jay Bernhardt, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**President-elect:** Maria Cervania, University of Illinois at Chicago

**Secretary:** Deborah Suess, George Washington University

**Treasurer:** Christine Haywood, George Washington University

## ..... Letter from the Editor

Send submissions to me at:  
1111 Arlington Boulevard, #1010  
Arlington, VA 22209

or by e-mail at  
youngh@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu

I welcome any and all suggestions or ideas you may have so do not hesitate to contact me. I hope you enjoy this issue and find the information helpful.

Heather Young  
Editor & Newsletter Committee Chair  
George Washington University