

OVERSEEING THE HEALTH OF THE PUBLIC

Volume 1, Issue 5

August, 2010

As local Board of Health members, you have a critical role in overseeing the health of the public. The policy direction and leadership you provide will help us achieve the state vision of healthy people in healthy communities. This newsletter from the Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH) is provided as a resource to you in this role.

Seth's Column



Dr. Seth Foldy,
MD, MPH, WI
State Health
Officer

Welcome new board members and thank you to all of you—new and returning members—for your work to oversee the health of the public in your jurisdictions. As local policy makers you are a critical partner to the Wisconsin Division of Public Health. You are joining your board of health in a time of great challenges and opportunities. Your leadership can and will make a difference. The Division of Public Health continues to be a resource to you. Please be sure to work with the regional office staff to have your questions answered. This newsletter and the website are also a resource for you. With the rapidly changing economic and political environment we know that you need good, reliable information. Some of the issues that I will be working with my staff on over the next several months include continued implementation of the Wisconsin State-wide Smoke-Free Air Law (Act 12), implementation of the state health plan for 2020 (more on this below), health care reform legislation and the grants and policies that this brings to Wisconsin, electronic medical records/e-health, quality improvement/ accreditation (more on this on the next page), and healthy birth outcomes. I hope that you are learning about these efforts and working to address them as a local level.

State Health Plan Released

Healthiest Wisconsin 2020: Everyone Living Better, Longer represents the third decade of statewide community health improvement planning that is designed to benefit the health of everyone in Wisconsin and the communities in which we live, play, work, and learn. *Healthiest Wisconsin 2020* declares a bold vision: *Everyone Living Better, Longer*, which reflects the plan's twin goals: improve health across the life span, and eliminate health disparities and achieve health equity.

The Department of Health Services is required to produce a public health agenda for the people of Wisconsin at least every 10 years. *Healthiest Wisconsin 2020* represents both a product—a state health plan—and an ongoing process using science, quality improvement, partnerships, and large-scale community engagement. More than 1,500 people from all walks of life gave of their time to advise, create, and engage in the development of this plan. It took a community of partners to create this plan, and it will take many more to implement it over the decade.

Local health departments are key partners in accomplishing the objectives in the state health plan. Every local health department is required by statute to develop their own Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Local efforts that build off of the data and priorities of the state health plan will support collaborative efforts to assure a healthier state. More information can be found at: <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/hw2020/index.htm>.



Accreditation and Quality Improvement in State, Tribal and Local Health Departments

In order to improve the health of the public, the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) is developing a national voluntary accreditation program for state, local, territorial and tribal public health departments. The goal of the accreditation program is to improve and protect the health of every community by advancing the quality and performance of public health departments.

The importance of quality public health services has recently been made quite clear, in the midst of the national debate on health care reform and efforts to control the spread of the H1N1 flu epidemic.

For public health departments, accreditation means demonstrated accountability and improved quality. Nationally, public health accreditation means that people across the country can expect the same quality of public health programs and services no matter where they live—in a Northeast city, a West Coast suburb, or a Midwest town. The expectation is that accreditation will strengthen public health departments and the services they provide, which will contribute to improved health outcomes in communities.

Wisconsin local health departments, tribal health departments and the state Division of Public Health have been actively involved in exploring accreditation and quality improvement. As a board member, you will be hearing more as this effort progresses. For more information on the national work being done, go to: <http://www.phaboard.org/>

Board of Health Member resource: Do you want more information on your role as a Board of Health member? Go to the website at <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/localhealth/BOHInformation/index.htm>. On this site are a variety of resources, training materials and contacts.

Did You Know:

- ◆ Life expectancy at birth for females: 80.4 years
- ◆ Life expectancy at birth for males: 75.4 years
- ◆ Percent of adults 18 years and over who currently smoke: 20.5%
- ◆ Percent of adults 18 years and over who had 5 or more drinks in 1 day at least once in the past year: 22%
- ◆ Percent of adults 20 years and over who are obese: 33.5%
- ◆ Percent of persons all ages in fair or poor health: 9.9%

Source: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/healthy.htm



For more information, contact your DPH Regional Office Director. Contact information available at: <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/localhealth/counties/regional.htm>