

# OVERSEEING THE HEALTH OF THE PUBLIC

Volume 2, Issue 2

April, 2011

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.

## Health Officer Highlights



Dr. Henry  
Anderson, MD,  
WI State Health  
Officer

Spring is almost upon us and National Public Health Week will be celebrated April 4-10. More information on this comes later in the newsletter. As a board member, you are a visible member of community who looks at public health policy and practice to improve health. Take this time to look at how injury—both intentional and non-intentional—impacts the health of your community. When you ride your bike this weekend, wear a helmet. When you drive to board meetings, wear your seat belt. When you look at new health department programs, consider the safety implications for staff and the community.

Spring has also brought many changes to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. We have welcomed a new Secretary for our Department, Dennis Smith. More information on Secretary Smith and the Department can be found at <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aboutdhs/>. While a new Division of Public Health Administrator has not yet been named, we continue to work with leadership on public health improvement. We will also be working closely with you as we see how the state and national public health budgets shape up in the coming months. We know that this has an impact on local health departments and are committed to providing assistance in addressing your health priorities. Please do not hesitate to contact your DPH Regional Office Director if you have questions.

Dr. Henry Anderson, Wisconsin State Health Officer

## What Works for Health—Policies and Programs to Improve Wisconsin's Health

What Works for Health is a database of policies and programs that can improve health. These policies and programs address health concerns that impact health outcomes. Summarized is research about what does and does not work to help different partners (such as public health practitioners, community organizations, businesses, schools, and others) identify policies and programs that could improve health.

This site is based on population health research that emphasizes the many health issues that can make communities healthier places to live, learn, work, and play. This database reviews policies and programs for each health concern, describing expected outcomes, how to implement in Wisconsin, addresses potential reach and impact on disparities, and gives other resources. It also provides opportunities to learn from communities that use these policies and programs. The site is organized with three categories:

Health Behaviors: Injury Prevention, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Risky Sexual Behavior, Substance Misuse or Dependency, Tobacco Use, Violent Behavior

Social & Physical Environment: Environmental Quality, Healthy Child Development & Education, Housing, Income & Employment, Social Connectedness

Public Health & Health Care Systems: Health Care Access, Health Care Quality & Costs, Quality of Public Health Services

These health concerns are all inter-related. Investments in all three categories are needed for Wisconsin to improve the health of its residents. Many decision makers can take actions to help improve Wisconsin's health.

Go to: <http://www.whatworksforhealth.wisc.edu/> for more information.

## National Public Health Week—April 4-10, 2011

**Creating a healthier nation starts with creating a safer nation**—and that means taking steps to protect neighbors, families and communities from harm. Injuries, unexpected events and violence affect people at home, at work, in their communities, on the move and even at play. Unintentional injuries, such as motor vehicle crashes, poisonings and burns, rank among the top 10 causes of death for people ages 1-44.

During **National Public Health Week 2011**, the American Public Health Association (APHA) needs your help to educate Americans that **“Safety is No Accident.”** Together, we can help Americans live injury-free in all areas of life: at work, at home, at play, in your community and anywhere people are on the move. We all need to do our part to prevent injuries and violence in our communities. Join us as we work together to create a safer and healthier nation.

### Taking Simple Steps to Prevent Injuries is More Than Just Common Sense—It Works:

- ◆ Two-thirds of children killed by bicycle-related injuries could have been saved by wearing a helmet. Helmets reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85% and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88%.
- ◆ In the car, child safety seats reduce the risk of death by 71% for infants and by 54% for toddlers ages 1-4.
- ◆ Early childhood home visitation can prevent child maltreatment episodes in high-risk families by 40%.
- ◆ Having a working smoke alarm cuts the risk of death from a house fire by 50%.

Help promote safety and prevent injuries and violence across the nation by taking action within your community. Here are just a few ways to involve your community during **National Public Health Week**:

- ◆ Hold a child safety seat demonstration to ensure safety seats are installed correctly.
- ◆ Ask local pharmacies to share medication safety tips with the community.
- ◆ Hold a brown bag lunch at work to focus on workplace safety.
- ◆ Work with local leaders to establish a community safety task force.

We can create a safer nation if each of us plays a part. Together we can work toward improving the safety of our communities.



Source: <http://www.nphw.org/nphw11/first1.htm>

**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.

### Save the Date:

**19th Annual NALBOH Conference  
September 7-9, 2011  
Coeur d'Alene, ID**

*“Public Health: Effective Governance, Strong Leadership, Engaged Citizens”*

2011 Annual Conference Goal: The 2011 Annual NALBOH Conference is designed to provide attendees with information about public health governance, current public health issues, and the role of strong leadership and citizens engaged in improving the health of our communities.

For more information check the NALBOH Conference website at [http://www.nalboh.org/NALBOH\\_Conference.htm](http://www.nalboh.org/NALBOH_Conference.htm)

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