

OVERSEEING THE HEALTH OF THE PUBLIC

Volume 1, Issue 4

April, 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



Dear Wisconsin Public Health System Partners:

Recognizing that April 5-11 is National Public Health Week, I would like to thank all of you for working so tirelessly to help make Wisconsin residents live longer and healthier lives.

Our entire public health system responded "as one" to the H1N1 influenza pandemic, and in many other ways throughout the year to keep Wisconsin residents healthy.

What you do matters! It matters to the people in your community, it matters to the people of Wisconsin, and it matters to your colleagues across the state. So take a few moments during National Public Health Week to reflect on all the good work that you do!

Make a difference this week in the health of your community as part of National Public Health Week. If every one of us commits to promoting good health in our communities, we can create a ripple effect from coast to coast. Through just one neighborhood that makes its public parks accessible, one municipality that launches a bike-helmet safety program, one group of people who join together to bring fresh foods to school, or one health center that offers a vaccination program, we can create a collage of public health successes across the country.

Let's make Wisconsin healthier, one community at a time. Go to the National Public Health Week website for more information: <http://www.nphw.org/nphw10/home1.htm>.

Thank you to outgoing Board of Health members:

With the spring election, some current board of health members will not be returning to their roles on the board. While we hope to continue to see many familiar faces in local boards of health, we know that all of you continue to be strong supporters of the important public health work that happens at the local level. Preventing disease and injury, and promoting health is strengthened by your understanding of the issues, commitment to community interventions, advocacy, and assurance of public health services. Thank you!

Quote of the Month: "The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, nor to worry about the future, but to live the present moment wisely and earnestly."

Buddha

May is Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month

In Wisconsin, asthma continues to be an important public health issue. More information is available on this topic at: <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/Asthma/> including information on the state plan to address health issues related to asthma. The 2003 Wisconsin Asthma Plan laid the foundation for the Wisconsin Asthma Coalition (WAC) and its partners to improve asthma management in Wisconsin and was successfully implemented in a number of capacities. The Wisconsin Asthma Plan 2009-2014 identifies additional goals set forth by WAC and seeks to be equally successful in its accomplishments. Data from the Burden of Asthma in Wisconsin 2007 (DHS, 2007) indicates that continued statewide efforts are necessary to address this public health issue. The report summarizes a variety of asthma data including prevalence, associated costs, disease management, emergency department (ED) and hospitalization visit rates, and mortality. Lifetime asthma prevalence has reached an all-time high of 13 percent in both Wisconsin children and adults, and costs the state over \$60 million annually in hospitalizations and ED visits.

County Health Rankings

The County Health Rankings—the first set of reports to rank the overall health of every county in all 50 states—are now available on www.countyhealthrankings.org.

The 50-state report, released by the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, help public health and community leaders, policy-makers, consumers and others to see how healthy their county is, compare it with others within their state and find ways to improve the health of their community.

Each county is ranked within the state on how healthy people are and how long they live. They also are ranked on key factors that affect health such as: smoking, obesity, binge drinking, access to primary care providers, rates of high school graduation, rates of violent crime, air pollution levels, liquor store density, unemployment rates and number of children living in poverty.

Other studies have ranked states on health factors, but this is the first time researchers have examined the multiple factors that affect health in each county in all 50 states. Find how your county ranked by going to the website.

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

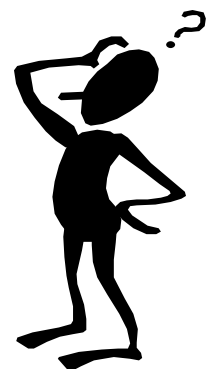
Did You Know:

April is:

- ◆ Alcohol Disease Awareness Month
- ◆ National Cancer Control Month
- ◆ National Donate Life Month
- ◆ National Public Health Week (5-11)
- ◆ Sports Eye Safety Month

May is:

- ◆ American Stroke Month
- ◆ Hepatitis Awareness Month
- ◆ Lyme Disease Awareness Month
- ◆ National Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month



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