

Lecture Hall

Session Abstracts

National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)
72nd Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition

Environmental Health Leadership Development

Tuesday, June 24

8:00 – 8:50am

Distinguished Leaders in Environmental Health

Assume the Position

Pete D. Thornton, RS, MPH, DAAS, Environmental Administrator, Volusia County Health Dept., FL

Dogs Don't Bark at Parked Cars: Leadership Midst the Din

Larry Gordon, MS, MPH, DHL, Sanitarian, NM

The January/February 2007 *Journal of Environmental Health* identified and profiled 15 distinguished environmental health practitioners as the faces of environmental health leadership. Selected from that extraordinary pool of accomplished leaders, two environmental health icons will be sharing their personal lessons in leadership in this session. This session is coordinated with tomorrow's Leadership Lounge in the Learning Laboratory, where a dozen of the distinguished leaders will be available to interactively relate their leadership experiences.

9:30 – 10:20am

Prominent Women Leaders in Environmental Health

Robbin Rose, MS, REHS, Environmental Health Specialist and Supervisor, Washoe County District Health Dept., NV

LCDR Celeste L. Davis, MPH, REHS, Director of Environmental Health Services, USPHS, IHS, NM

Janet Williams, REHS, Division Director, Saint Louis County Dept. of Health, MO

In recent years, the environmental health profession has seen a dramatic increase in the number of women in the workforce. This shift in the environmental health workforce is an exciting and welcome sign of the advancement of our profession. However, this shift has brought unique challenges and considerations that women often times face on the path to leadership. The presenters during this session will share their personal stories of success and provide recommendations and advice for upcoming leaders of BOTH genders.

11:00 – 11:50am

Emerging Leaders in Environmental Health

Organizational Learning and Environmental Health Problem Solving—Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute Fellow Presentations

Moderator: CAPT John Sarisky, RS, MPH, Senior Environmental Health Officer, USPHS, CDC, GA

Presenting Fellows:

Pieter A. Sheehan, REHS, Environmental Public Health Manager, Saint Charles County Government, MO

Susan G. King, Director, Nassau County Dept. of Health, NY

In The National Strategy to Revitalize Environmental Public Health Services, the National Center for Environmental Health has identified six goals; one of the most important goals is to foster the development leadership. CDC's Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute (EPHLI) initiated activities in December of 2004 and graduated its first class of Fellows in 2006. The institute was developed to strengthen the country's environmental public health system by enhancing the leadership capabilities of state and local environmental public health specialists. Emphasis is placed on developing action learning and systems thinking skills as each fellow designs and implements a leadership project. During this session, EPHLI Fellows from the graduating class of 2008 will present project outcomes from their leadership development projects.

1:30 – 2:20pm

Advancing the Profession of Environmental Health in Massachusetts with Academic Partners

Patrick Maloney, RS, CHO, MPAH, Chief of Environmental Health, Brookline Health Dept., MA

James White, RS, Senior Environmental Health Specialist, Natick Health Dept., MA

Kathleen MacVarish, MS, RS, Director of Practice Programs and Assistant Professor of Environmental Health, Boston University School of Public Health, MA

Steven Ward, MA, MPH, REHS, Director, Watertown Health Dept., MA

Larry Ramdin, MA, REHS, CP-FS, Health Services Administrator, Town of Reading, MA

Massachusetts is unique because each of its 351 cities and towns has two sources of local public health services: the state health department, and a local Board of Health that is funded and operated by the community. A state-wide workforce assessment conducted in Massachusetts last year for the Coalition of Local Public Health found that 63% of communities with populations $\leq 10,000$ have no full time public health staff, and that 18% of the public health workforce will be eligible to retire in the next 2 years. In response to these findings, the Massachusetts Environmental Health Association and its academic partners developed and sponsored three programs, which will enhance critical staff resources needed by local Boards of Health to provide Massachusetts residents with essential public health services.

(1) The New England Alliance for Public Health Workforce Development, sponsored by Boston University School of Public Health, promotes and facilitates collaborative education and training among academic, local, state and regional public health agencies to enhance the quality of public health services, especially for underserved areas and populations in the region.

(2) BUSPH also collaborated with local health departments to develop CD-ROMs, which were distributed to local Boards of Health to demonstrate basic skills needed for proper job performance.

(3) Worcester State College hosts an environmental health internship program for undergraduate students who want an internship that provides an overview of and orientation to, local public and environmental health practice in Massachusetts.

These three programs show how the Massachusetts Environmental Health Association collaborates with the academic community to provide local Boards of Health with trained and knowledgeable staff. Program such as these strengthen the local public health infrastructure and promote healthy communities in Massachusetts through strong Boards of Health and Health Departments.

3:00 – 3:50pm

Using Simple Customer Service Surveys to Improve Environmental Health Programs

Bob Custard, REHS, Environmental Health Manager, Alexandria Health Dept., VA

Short, simple customer service surveys can provide a lot of useful information to environmental health managers. Paper-based surveys piggy-backed on invoice mailings or hand-delivered at the time of facility inspection provide ways of distributing surveys at no cost. The data gleaned from these surveys can provide good information about the effectiveness of your EH programs.

Addressing concerns or criticisms raised by the regulated community allows an EH program to focus on building cooperative programs that help industry succeed in the regulatory environment. Identifying each survey with the name of the EHS responsible for the establishment that each survey is distributed to facilitates the use of the data in the employee performance evaluation process.

Creating an annual customer service report from the data allows an EH manager to track trends and measure progress towards customer service goals. A customer service report can also be used to market the importance of your EH program to your local government officials in ways that help you obtain and maintain EH program funding.

4:30 – 5:20pm

Enhancing Services by Applying the Environmental Public Health Performance Standards: Experiences from the Field

Moderator: Patrick O. Bohan, PhD, MS, MSEH, RS, Assistant Professor, East Central University, OK

Panelists:

*LCDR Celeste L. Davis, MPH, REHS, Director of Environmental Health Services, USPHS, IHS, NM
CAPT John Sarisky, RS, MPH, Senior Environmental Health Officer, USPHS, CDC, GA*

How do we measure the capability of environmental health programs to perform the essential services of environmental health? How do we identify needed changes to enhance capability? How do we measure improvement? Answers lie in the application of the National Environmental Public Health Performance Standards (NEnvPHPS). Prior to the 2007 NEHA AEC, representatives from seventeen jurisdictions participated in a pre-conference NEnvPHPS workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to present the NEnvPHPS to a group of environmental health practitioners who volunteered to participate. Participants agreed to review and complete the NEnvPHPS instrument prior to the workshop. The workshop lasted a day and a half and provided the participants with a background of the standards, a review of the results from the completed standards instrument, and an opportunity to complete a gap analysis and action plan for addressing identified gaps. During the twelve months after the workshop, participants worked at implementing their action plans and measuring improvement within their programs. Panelists will share their experience with completing the standards instrument and review the challenges and successes associated with their efforts to improve services.