



**New Jersey  
Local Boards of Health Association**

# NEWSLETTER

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www.NJLBHA.org

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## President's Message

**T**hose of you who are reading this and have not yet renewed your annual membership in your state association or, worse yet, have never joined our ranks, please get in the tent; our tent – the big top of local public health. We need you now, more than ever!!!

Last year, for the first time, we were able to claim just over 100 member boards. We are your voice in Trenton and, as the state affiliate for the National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH), we are included in many national, state and local forums, both in defense of local public health and in regard to capacity and consensus building. Our national and state leaders recognize that we are the “go to” group. But we must have your support to fulfill these obligations for you. We are often asked by public health officials and others, "Who are our members?"

Many times these individuals are happy or chagrined when they find, or do not find, you on our roster. Get in the tent!

Many times we need capable and willing board members to fulfill the ever-increasing list of projects and services requested. We continue to search for and recruit members from around the state for our board of directors. Get in the tent!

More frequently each year, we are running or participating in important gatherings in support of efforts to better educate local board members. Most still do not understand their statutory responsibilities nor do they exercise the power given to them by statutes, ordinances, regulations and national policies. Too often this leads to lost opportunities and lack of action. Please make note of the dates of events in this newsletter. These are for you. Turn out and get informed. Get in the tent!

Your association is privileged to be a member of the steering committee for the statewide public health assessment that includes opinions and viewpoints from all major New Jersey public health players. This assessment will produce a report from CDC highlighting strong and weak points in our statewide system and will hopefully set the agenda for improvement. This assessment is the first piece in the public health performance standards pie. The second piece is the department assessment for our paid staff and their organization as led by your health officer. The third and final piece is the governance assessment, which through 150 completed documents in New Jersey, makes us the national leader in this project even though less than one third of our boards have thus far participated. We commend the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services for taking on statewide

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### Save the Date!

**NJLBHA Conference on  
Emergency Preparedness for Boards of Health  
November 14  
Middlesex County Fire Academy**

**Commissioners Conference  
October 8  
Mercer County College**

**PHACE CONFERENCE September 28 TBA**

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# New Jersey State Public Health System Performance Assessment

by Kevin McNally

On April 23 and 24, 2009, more than 100 stakeholders in New Jersey's public health system met to advance the effectiveness of public health in this State through participating in completing the State Public Health System Performance Assessment. The State Assessment is a questionnaire developed by the National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHPSP) of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The State Assessment is one of three instruments developed by the NPHPSP to measure the performance of the 10 Essential Public Health Services by public health systems at various levels in comparison to model standards developed by the CDC in collaboration with national public health organizations. More information about these assessments and the model standards can be found at NPHPSP's website: <http://www.cdc.gov/od/ocphp/nphpsp/>.

New Jersey is one of the States to have made the greatest use of these instruments. Local health departments in 17 counties, through their county Governmental Public Health Partnerships (GPHPs), have completed the Local Public Health System Performance Assessment instrument as part of the process of developing their Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs), while 150 Local Boards of Health have completed the Local Public Health Governance Performance Assessment. Performing the State Assessment completes the process of looking at public health in New Jersey at all levels.

The State Assessment was organized jointly by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and the New Jersey Public Health Associations Collaborative Effort (PHACE). Representatives of DHSS and the PHACE organizations, including the New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association (NJLBOHA) participated on a Steering Committee that planned the meeting. Staff from the DHSS – Office of Public Health Infrastructure handled the logistics of the meeting.

The participants in the Assessment meeting represented the major stakeholders in New Jersey's statewide public health system, including DHSS, other State agencies, local health departments, local boards of health, public health associations, health care provider associations, hospitals, primary care providers, mental health and substance abuse providers, health insurers, health promotion and advocacy organizations, academia and community-based organizations. NJLBOHA was represented by five members of its Executive Board.

The meeting on April 23 began with speakers from the CDC NPHPSP and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers (ASTHO), who described the purpose and development of the assessment instrument and process. The participants were then divided into five working groups, each of which completed the assessment for two of the ten Essential Public Health Services over the next two days. To assure the neutrality of the assessment process, DHSS contracted with a consultant to facilitate the working groups and to prepare the report of the meeting. Holleran was

selected as the consultant through a competitive bidding process. This organization had previously worked with several New Jersey counties in assisting them to complete the Local Public Health System Performance Assessment and in preparing their CHIPs.

A preliminary report of the State Assessment results will be presented at the Annual Conference of State and Local Health Officials on October 8, 2009. The afternoon of the Annual Conference will be devoted to completion of the final piece of the Assessment, which is the Priority of Model Standards questionnaire. The results of this questionnaire will provide guidance in determining the performance improvement activities resulting from this assessment process. The final report of the State Assessment, including the priority questionnaire results, will be completed in December 2009.

The completion of the State Assessment provides all the participants in New Jersey's public health system with sense of what the public health community sees as our strengths and weaknesses, provides direction for future performance activities, and will serve as a baseline for measuring the results of these activities. Moreover, it is hoped that the collaborative process used to perform the Assessment will lead to a stronger sense among the stakeholders that they are integral parts of the larger public health system and provide an impetus to continue to work together to improve how that system functions to improve the public's health.

# NALBOH Conference Update

## NALBOH Board Plan to Disenfranchise Members Stopped

NALBOH recently held the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Philadelphia. There were a great number of interesting speakers and programs aimed at members of local boards of health. However the conference was marred by an attempt by the NALBOH board of directors to disenfranchise many of its members. The Board tried to pass Bylaw changes that would stop the general membership from electing the President-Elect and the Secretary Treasurer and turn that responsibility over to the Board of Directors. Furthermore, the directors also sought to modify the by-laws to allow only those who could afford to at-

tend the national conference (the 2008 conference was in Alaska; the 2010 conference will be held in Omaha, Nebraska) to have the right to vote for the Board of Directors. Your NJ Local Boards of Health Association strongly opposed these by-law changes and were joined in that opposition by many other delegates present. We were successful in defeating these by-law changes. In the future the NJ Local Boards of Health Association will continue to fight any attempts to disenfranchise our members in NJ or the membership in general.

## Job Description for Board Members

Is there a Job Description for Board of Health members? Well basically your responsibilities are laid out in PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE FOR LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH IN NEW JERSEY N.J.S.A. 26:1A-15 and 26:3A2-1 et seq. Every Board member should have a copy of these standards. If you do not have one you will find them on the New Jersey Local Boards of Health association website [www.njlbha.org](http://www.njlbha.org). In addition to these specific responsibilities here is a general list of items included in your job description

1. Be aware of the mission and goals of the Health Department.
2. Learn about all programs and services

provided by the agency.

3. Become familiar with the guidelines and rules that govern the department and the board.
4. Establish policies.
5. Be regular and punctual at board and committee meetings. If unable to attend, give early notice to the appropriate staff member.
6. Be involved in the meetings; ask questions. Discuss and participate in the decision-making process. If you are not clear as to the facts, ideas or suggestions at hand, ask for clarification. Try to avoid using meeting time for items that may be accomplished before or after the meeting.
7. Be informed on the issues on the agenda in order to discuss them responsibly.

8. Speak out on issues you do not favor. Silence is often interpreted as consent.
9. Know and understand the roles and responsibilities of the board and staff.
10. Know and maintain open lines of communication between the board and staff.
11. Help identify the needs of the community.
12. Understand the financial statements presented. As a board member, you are responsible for the financial stability of the agency.
13. Support and assist in identifying prospective sources of funding.
14. Hire, supervise and evaluate the Health Officer.
15. Represent the Health Department to your community.

# Public Health Acronym List

Most of us are overwhelmed by all the acronyms used in public health. We thought that the following may be a primer of sorts to help you navigate some of the terms you may hear during your work as members of Local Boards of Health.

**ANR** American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation

**APEX-CPH** Assessment and Planning Excellence Through Community Partners for Health; an assessment tool (originally AP-EXPH).

**APHA** American Public Health Association

**ASTHO** Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

**BT** Bioterrorism

**CART** County Animal Rescue Team

**CERT** County Emergency Response Team

**CDC** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**CHIP** Community Health Improvement Plan

**CHSI** Community Health Status Indicators

**DHHS** Department of Health and Senior Services

**EH** Environmental Health

**FEMA** Federal Emergency Management System

**HOA** Health Officers Association

**HRSA** Health Resources and Services Administration

**ICS** Incident Command System

**LBOH** Local Board of Health

**MAPP** Mobilizing Action through Planning and Partnerships

**NACCHO** National Association of County and City Health Officials

**NALBOH** National Association of Local Boards of Health

**NCEH** National Center for Environmental Health

**NCI** National Cancer Institute

**NJDEP** New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

**NJDHSS** New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services

**NJLBHA** New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association

**NPHPSP** National Public Health Performance Standards Program

**NJ GASP** Global Advisors on Smoke Free Policy

**OSHA** Occupational Safety and Health Administration

**PEOSH** Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (Program ACE EH Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health)

**PHACE** the Public Health Associations' Collaborative Effort, is comprised of the leadership of New Jersey's seven recognized public health associations (New Jersey Health Officers Associations, New Jersey Environmental Health Associations, New Jersey Association of Public Health Nurse Administrators, New Jersey Society of Public Health Educators, New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association), with representatives of the New Jersey State Department of Health and Senior Services as liaisons

**PHF** Public Health Foundation

**PHPF** Public Health Priority Funding

**PHPPO** Public Health Program Practice Office

**SOPHE** Society of Public Health Educator

**SALBOH** State Association of Local Boards of Health

**USDA** United States Department of Agriculture

**WHO** World Health Organization

**WIC** Women, Infants, and Children (Program)

## H1N1 Flu – What to do?

We have all been reading about the spread of H1N1 flu virus not only here in NJ but throughout the world. The question arises as to what is our responsibility as Local Boards of Health members to minimize the impact of H1N1 virus in our communities.

As of now, vaccines are being developed and speculation is that they may be available as of late September. In the meantime, the best advice given by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other health experts is to urge the public to take basic precautions against the spread of this virus and other contagious illnesses. Additionally, as a Board of Health member, you must assure that your local health department has developed an emergency plan to deal with a potential pandemic.

It is recommended that flyers be distributed throughout the community urging people to take the following steps to minimize the risk of contagion.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. This is to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus further.

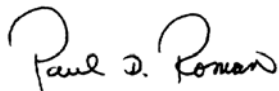
It is also recommended that you keep up with the changes in the situation through [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and working with your local health officer.

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assessment project in an open and enthusiastic manner.

Recognize that the current public health emergency and other more local and repetitive events, which require your input, are a call to action, which are best met by a trained, well-organized and prepared local board. This, of course, means more time and effort, rewarded by the knowledge that you have made a significant difference.

The leadership of NJLBHA is focused on supporting our member boards. We enjoy meeting and working with you. Please contact us to learn more. Join us in doing more.



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## Yes, count me (us) in as a part of the Association!

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Yes, count me (us) in as a part of the Association that gives New Jersey's Boards of Health and their members a voice in Trenton, a way to communicate among ourselves, a force for progress in public health and more knowledge for board members.

### **Full Board, Regular Membership \$95**

Board membership is open to municipal, county and regional Boards of Health. All board members are included for the calendar year.

### **Individual, Regular Membership \$20**

Individual membership is open to current members of municipal, county or regional boards of health whose full board is not a member.

### **Individual, Associate Membership \$20**

Associate membership is open to past Board of Health members, students, or other individuals interested in public health. This is a non-voting membership.

### **Institutional Membership \$95**

Institutional membership is open to organizations, including environmental groups, planning boards, or other municipal or county agencies, committees, commissions, or councils. This is a non-voting membership.

Board Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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**NEW JERSEY LOCAL BOARDS OF  
HEALTH ASSOCIATION**

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